The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. XLII NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 1925 NUMBER 535

Contents

The Week 26

Editorials

The Happiness of France and European Peace.... 29
A Plea for Plutocracy 31
Will Protection Help the Farmer? 32

General Articles

Houses of Tomorrow.....Bruce Bliven 34
So This Is Peace!.....Rebecca West 37
Notes on Modern Literature, III..Edmund Wilson 39
Night Wind (verse).....David Morton 40
Native Air .....Mable Dodge Luhan 40
Washington Notes .....T. R. B. 42

Correspondence 44

Three Shades of Black .....Robert Littell 45

Reviews of Books

The Compleat Conservative.....C. E. Ayres 46
Mr. Firkins on Howells.....Robert Herrick 47
Journalism in Excelsis.....B. B. 48
A Negro Novel.....Eric Walrond 48

The Week

THE dispatches from Washington last week regarding a possible new conference to be called by the United States for the purpose of limiting auxiliary naval craft may or may not have been official trial balloons; but in any case they were premature. Everyone has known for a long time that President Coolidge would like to call another Washington Conference to supplement that of 1921. He realizes clearly, however, that his task would be infinitely more difficult and dangerous than was that of President Harding. For one thing, the subject of armament reduction for those countries which are members of the League of Nations is bound up with the Protocol of Geneva, and while it has become the fashion to say that the Protocol is dead, this is far from the truth. It may and probably will need extensive revision; but it was created in answer to needs so pressing that it cannot be tossed on the scrap heap merely because clumsy British diplomats permitted it to be worded at the beginning to suit French rather than English ideas. The Protocol has already profoundly altered the character of international thinking about the questions of security and disarmament. A Coolidge Conference which was held, as it certainly would be, in terms of pre-Protocol thought, appealing for reduced armament on grounds of economy and providing no alternative means of security would be one at which Europe would quite properly look askance.

GREAT BRITAIN has received the suggestion as politely as she has, for several reasons. First of all, British leaders have been greatly disturbed by French activity in building auxiliary naval craft, and particularly submarines. At the Washington Conference the British wanted submarines abolished; and they would still like to see this done. Probably they have little hope of any such development in 1925; but they expect to see the burden of refusal put squarely on France, with the loss of moral prestige which will follow. Another reason for looking on the Conference favorably is that the British are eager to maintain an entente of the English-speaking world. A third is the expectation (probably erroneous) that America may reopen discussion of the Allied debts and cancel a large part of the $11,000,000,000 total in exchange for an agreement to limit auxiliary naval craft.

WHEN you survey the actual results of the Harding Conference and consider what is the utmost Mr. Coolidge can hope to achieve, it is impossible not to be profoundly discouraged about limitation of armament as a road to world peace. The Harding Conference with enormous difficulty succeeded in reducing the number of battleships maintained by the powers. It did so at a time when the battleship had become semi-obsolete, when every nation but the United States was already bankrupt or nearly so and when existing building programs would in a few years' time have left this country undisputed mistress of the seas. To be sure, almost any conference is better than none, since these meetings afford an opportunity to thresh out subjects of dispute, and sometimes do promote a better understanding of one another's problems. Thus the Washington Conference relieved to a considerable degree the growing tension in the Pacific—a tension which Congress and Mr. Hearst have subsequently done all they can to restore. No one can say honestly, however, that on the broad stage of world

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affairs the Washington Conference did anything to make war substantially less likely or more difficult to carry on. Smaller naval vessels were left unlimited. No halt was put on submarines, airplanes, poison gas. Land armies were not even mentioned. As an antidote for war the Harding Conference and the proposed Coolidge Conference are absurdly, pathetically unimportant. It is as though in a western mining camp without a government some one sought to keep the peace by asking all desperadoes to confine themselves to the use of two pistols, a rifle and a bowie knife.

THERE is an important difference between the attitude of the Labor government of Great Britain toward the Protocol of Geneva and that of the present Conservative government. Mr. MacDonald advocated immediate disarmament, without reference to the question of security, because he is a convinced pacifist to whom all armies and navies are ipso facto wrong. The Baldwin government is reluctant to sign an agreement which binds Great Britain to underwrite French policy on the continent and protect France from the consequences of that policy. While it is easy to understand British objections to the Protocol as now written, honesty demands recognition of the fact that in the long run France is correct. The way to end war is not by proposing that the nations shall throw away their arms or part of their arms, while remaining in their present general frame of mind. Wars are to be prevented only by the creation of machinery for settling international disputes peacefully and by the mobilizing of world sentiment in favor of such adjudication. If that is done, armament by individual nations will become archaic; if it is not done, limitation of armament by mutual agreement merely makes war a little more inconvenient and cheaper.

THE House investigation of the condition of our air service, after having come to a sudden halt because of alleged lack of funds, is about to be resumed, as we go to press, the discovery having been made that the investigators have more money on hand than was supposed. We sincerely hope that it will be continued until it has come to some sort of conclusion as to the merits of the controversy between the navy and the air force. The gravest sort of charges have been made as to the inefficiency of the present military and naval establishment; and persons who are certainly entitled to be ranked as experts have declared that the airplane will be the decisive factor in future warfare. They maintain that we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars on obsolete weapons while almost completely failing to provide ourselves with the new ones. Brigadier-General Mitchell is undoubtedly almost fanatical in his devotion to the airplane. It is true that his statements have been sensational, not improbably because he realizes that anything milder would be ineffective in calling the country's attention to what he regards as our perilous plight. It must be said, however, that those who have replied to him have made a lame case for themselves. They have, for one thing, apparently been trying to have him removed from his position. In the second place, they have waved the flag and recited the names of the heroes of the late War, seeking to prove that anyone who holds opposing views is not truly patriotic. In the third place, testimony before the House committee has obviously been uncandid. Perhaps this has been true on both sides. The bravery of an admiral who stands on deck while his battleship is bombed from the air is seen in somewhat different perspective when you learn that the bombs were bags of sand. To the charge that battleships are helpless under aërial attack, no conclusive reply has been made; and the authorities are obviously badly scared at the suggestion that a ship be bombed exactly as it would be in war. With matters standing as at present the people of the country will be far from satisfied that everything is as it should be.

THE Chicago meeting of the Conference for Progressive Political Action ran true to the predictions. A new political party, as yet unnamed, was formed, the essential feature of which was the adoption of a geographical basis of representation as a substitute for the various occupational and political groups represented in the Conference itself. The Railroad Brotherhoods, as was expected, were unfavorable to the creation of the new party; and other elements represented in the conference opposed the new geographical basis. On the underlying policy we shall comment in a later issue; at present it need only be said that it represents the judgment of the practical politician on the experience of last fall's campaign. At that time the effort to fuse so many varying groups, more or less incompatible with one another, seemed to present almost insuperable obstacles to a successful political campaign. The new organization is the obvious but extremely doubtful method of curing this difficulty.

THE Sixty-eighth Congress and Secretary Hughes are decidedly not going out in a blaze of glory. The Congress elected to make itself notorious at the last moment by raising the salaries of its members $2,500 each. It is probably true that the increase in the cost of living in recent years justified the action; and certainly, the affairs of the United States, as a business which involves the annual collection and expenditure of $3,700,000,000, deserve the attention of men worth $10,000 a year. The way in which the bill was passed was, however, a pitiable exhibition of cowardice. No one dared speak in its favor, or even participate in a record vote—a humiliating spectacle of mingled cupidity and timidity. Secretary Hughes, likewise, has seen the closing days of his administration marred by the revelation that before he would permit Count Karolyi

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to come to America to visit the Countess, dangerously ill in a New York hospital, he exacted a promise of rigorous self-censorship. The Count was only admitted on condition that he should not say a word on political subjects while here. This demand of course was made in the interest of the bloody-handed Horthy government of Hungary. Admiral Horthy, the Regent, who holds his naval title by courtesy and his Regency in the same fashion that Mussolini holds Rome, quite wisely fears to have the American people know the truth about Hungarian affairs, and particularly from the liberal ex-Premier who has sacrificed so much for his country. We can quite understand Admiral Horthy's anxiety. What we find difficult to understand is Secretary Hughes's acquiescence.

NEW YORK CITY is in the throes of another censorship crisis—its sixth, according to one enumerator, in two years. This one originated in a protest against several plays, of no importance as art, which went to unusual lengths of vulgarity in word and action. As is always true of such crusades, it has run away with itself. At the moment of going to press District Attorney Joab H. Banton, who has revived the moribund machinery of a "citizens' jury system" for most of the dramas which are alleged to offend, is contemplating criminal action against just one of them. That one is Desire Under the Elms, by Eugene O'Neill, a sombre New England tragedy of seventy years ago. It is wildest absurdity to suppose that anyone's morals could be impaired by viewing this drama; no one with any intelligence could entertain the notion for a moment. But people with intelligence are not consulted when censorship's afoot, and it is quite possible that by the time this issue of the New Republic is published, the most recent work of the greatest American playwright may have been stopped on the idiotic ground that it is "obscene."

MANY persons who object to censorship by policemen feel that a triumph has been achieved in the invention of the citizens' jury system whereby twelve supposedly eminent volunteers are to inspect any drama under suspicion of being tainted and pass judgment on it. This jubilation we cannot share. For one thing, it is unlikely that the system will work at all: it has been instituted before, only to break down immediately. But even if it functions, it is a poor makeshift. Any twelve Official Eminences are just as likely to be wrong as any two or three policemen: and especially with the eyes of the community upon them, forcing them into mob-mindedness. Twenty-five years ago New York was in an uproar over Sapho. Any citizens' jury at that time would certainly have stopped it, just as five years later they would have stopped Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession. Both actions would have been absurd and unjust. These are changing times; and anything a play jury of 1925 might do will certainly seem equally absurd and unjust by 1940. There is no safe censorship save that which any citizen may exercise by getting up and walking out of any theatre where he has been offended. Any other sort is fairly certain to burn down the house in the effort to renovate the drains.

ON February 20 the New School for Social Research celebrated its sixth anniversary. As educational chronology goes, six years represent but a moment, too brief for any serious undertaking to attain to fixity of character. Nevertheless the character of the New School, if not fixed, presents an appearance of definiteness. It is distinctive in its appeal to students, persons of maturity who wish to carry on the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, without the specific inducement of academic credits or degrees. It is distinctive also in seeking to build its teaching staff for the most part from the personnel actively engaged in enterprises outside the School. That is, teachers and students are alike drawn from active life instead of being set apart, for a period of years or throughout a career exclusively for intellectual pursuits. The research program of the School, still in inchoate form, contemplates a similar distinctiveness. It is hoped that the School may presently be in a position to encourage students employed in industry, finance, social administration, public service, the business administration of labor, union functions, etc., to carry through researches based upon the material to which they have specially favorable access. Among the thousand students registered for general courses there are many who with adequate backing could make unique and valuable contributions in social science and related fields.

WE are glad to note that during the past week two victims of injustice inspired by reaction have received a measure of relief. Carlo Tresca, editor of Il Martello, an Italian newspaper in New York, has had his term in the federal penitentiary at Atlanta reduced from one year to four months; and the Boston Transcript has apologized to Captain Paxton Hibben for the statement about him in its columns, written by the notorious R. M. Whitney of the American Defense Society. With both these cases our readers are probably familiar. Tresca was tried and sentenced for publishing an advertisement of a work on birth control; but it has repeatedly been alleged, and never disputed, that he was punished at the instigation of the Italian ambassador because of his hostility to the Mussolini régime. President Coolidge has acted wisely and honorably in cutting eight months off his term; but it would have been still wiser and more honorable to set him free altogether, since the evidence indicates so strongly that the affair was a political persecution.

JUSTICE has been even longer delayed in the case of Captain Hibben and the Boston Transcript. As

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everyone knows, our professional patriots habitually deal in slander and frequently in slander which is definitely libellous. One of the worst offenders was the late Mr. Whitney, of the American Defense Society, author of numerous incredibly inaccurate accusations of Bolshevism against various American liberals. In 1922, he persuaded the Boston Transcript to publish some of this material, including accusations against Captain Hibben. The latter at once brought suit for libel; and for two years and five months has been seeking to secure from the Transcript a public retraction of these charges. Our readers may remember that the War Department has recently been investigating Captain Hibben's fitness to retain his commission in the Officers' Reserve Corps, and has held extended hearings in New York City. Presumably as a result of the testimony brought forward in these hearings, the Transcript has now published a retraction and the libel suit has been withdrawn. We are glad to see that the truth in regard to Captain Hibben—a truth which has never been in doubt to anyone who has known him—has thus been made a matter of public record. We wish that more of the victims of Mr. Whitney, and of other professional patriots, would follow his course and, however absurd the charges made, would insist upon formal vindication.

The Happiness of France and European Peace

THE dubious and alarming aspects of the foreign policy of the French government continue to be the chief source of political apprehension and unrest in Europe. The psychological weather which pervades the high altitudes of European politics always originates in Paris, and this weather has once again become almost as disquieting, lowering and incalculable as it was two years ago when the French army marched into the Ruhr. The French are more than ever restless and hard to please. Napoleon in the early years of his reign declared that Europe was at peace because France was happy. The implication was obvious. The happiness of France being indispensable to the peace of Europe, it was clearly the chief business of Europe which wished to avoid war to keep France contented.

If Louis Napoleon's vainglorious dictum is still true, there is small chance of European peace. The France of today is notoriously unhappy. She began to be unhappy after her defeat in 1871. She has remained unhappy ever since. She has been more rather than less unhappy since her victory in 1918. For the victory imposed temporarily on the government of France a preponderant position in the counsels of Europe which has no justification in the volume of her physical resources or in the disinterested and constructive quality of her aims. Although this preponderance cannot endure, Frenchmen are passionately unwilling either to resign it or to allow it to be taken away. Yet the efforts which French politicians are making to maintain it are ruining her finances, straining the patience of her friends and alienating the sympathy of the civilized world.

Consider for instance the vicissitudes of the franc which register sensitively not only the financial anxieties but the political vagaries of French policy. Ever since the defeat of 1871 the French government has lived beyond its income. Its national debt increased steadily during the years of peace from 1872 until 1914. It never attempted to pay the indemnity to Germany out of taxation. During the War France financed herself entirely by loans, and after the War was over she borrowed enormous additional sums to reconstruct the devastated districts. Although she spent this money in the expectation of being reimbursed by reparations from Germany she placed insuperable barriers in the way of German economic recovery. The debt of France has almost doubled since the Armistice. A very large part of it consists of short term securities which have to be frequently renewed, and if at any time their owners demand to be paid, bankruptcy is inevitable. It promises to be more than ever difficult during the remainder of the year to persuade the French holders of this debt to exchange new securities for old. In spite of the imposition of fresh taxation, the ordinary budget still falls short of a satisfactory balance. In desperation the Prime Minister implores all Frenchmen to rally to the support of the national credit as a matter of patriotic duty; a few days later his Finance Minister hints that the French Treasury may have to appeal once more to the American bankers. In the meantime French politicians are in a quandary about their foreign debt. They are unable to calculate how France can pay any part of her "political" obligations to Great Britain or the United States or how she can safely avoid payment or how they can stomach the consequence of not paying.

Serious as these financial troubles are, successive French governments pursue inflexibly the policy of preponderance which is clearly responsible for their impending bankruptcy. After M. Poincaré accepted the Dawes plan and M. Herriot imposed no impossibilities on its administration, some of us hoped that the French politicians really proposed to give Germany a chance to emerge from her bondage and to let her regain some measure of profitable and self-respecting life. It is not easy to sustain these hopes in the light of French refusal to permit the evacuation of Cologne. There were doubtless sound reasons why the evacuation, which under the Treaty should have taken place early in January, should be postponed until after the proposed evacuation of the Ruhr. There were also plausible, if less sound, reasons why the French government should insist upon conditioning the evacuation on the reaching of a satisfactory understanding with the German government about any possible violation of the clauses in the treaty which provided for German

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disarmament. The ominous aspect of the French policy has consisted less in what the French government have done than in the high-handed way they have done it. M. Herriot refused as usual to call the German Cabinet into consultation and to treat them as the representative of a people possessed of ordinary political rights and moral susceptibilities. The French still claim to be the only authoritative interpreters of all agreements with Germany. They still negotiate with that country chiefly by means of commands, threats and ultimatums.

The most discouraging recent disclosure of the motives of French policy is contained in M. Herriot's great speech some weeks ago on the security of France and its consequences for Germany and the rest of Europe. This speech was imperfectly reproduced in the American papers, but its chief thesis as revealed by the English reports closely assimilated the position of M. Herriot, the French radical leader, to that of M. Poincaré. It was an extremely provocative utterance. The speaker must have deliberately tried to refresh the feelings of revenge and hatred which one hoped might be fading away. He announced a doctrine which in practice will render the peace of Europe incompatible with the security and happiness of France. The fundamental factor in French policy, according to M. Herriot, consists in one deeply rooted conviction. Failing an external international guarantee and failing German "moral disarmament" French security may, should and can be assured by the indefinite retention of the Rhine frontier. In view of the intense German animosity towards France, there might be some justification for this ultimatum if, since the Armistice, France had sincerely and intelligently attempted to strengthen the party of peace and moderation in Germany. The French were under a heavy obligation to set up a trustworthy legal method of reducing the grievances of a Germany which they had disarmed and safeguarding and defending her fundamental rights. But Frenchmen have never acted on any such obligation. The policy of France victorious and irresistible has been calculated to provoke German resentment and desire for revenge while at the same time its perpetrators insist that the existence of the resentment is a sufficient reason for continuing to browbeat and humiliate the German people and to occupy German territory.

This contradiction in French policy renders it incompatible with the permanent peace of Europe. The French politicians are doing their best to intensify the resentment of Germany. Yet at the same time they demand that Europe as a whole shall protect them against the consequences of their own domineering. So far they have succeeded in obtaining the coöperation of the other powers in treating Germany as a nation which, even though disarmed and helpless, must be systematically suspected, bullied and coerced. They threaten, if this coöperation is withheld, to persist in permanent military occupation of Germany up to the Rhine. In spite of this threat the complaisance of the rest of Europe will sooner or later inevitably cease. The other powers cannot continue the absurdity of organizing Europe chiefly to protect a completely armed nation against an outlawed neighbor which is both disarmed and oppressed. If the French politicians propose to continue their present treatment of Germany indefinitely, they will eventually be asked to do it with their own resources and at their own expense. The rest of Europe and America so far from coöperating with the French policy are gradually screwing up their courage to refuse. The French policy is an expression of a self-righteous national egotism. It insists upon the subordination of the whole political system of Europe to the guarantee of French security. Yet in return for this guarantee of security France will not surrender or seriously abate her legal right to deny to her hereditary enemy the fundamental conditions of independence and self-respect.

The chief object of British and American policy in Europe should be to bring about a permanent reconciliation between France and Germany. There will be no peace in Europe in the absence of such a reconciliation. The obstacles in its way are many and formidable, but the most formidable consists in the inevitable effect on German national psychology of being relentlessly outlawed and browbeaten. If there is to be any reconciliation, France as the present aggressor must begin by modifying that policy. If necessary she must be induced to do so against her will. There is, we believe, one way in which other nations can exert an irresistible pressure on France to relent. They can refuse any further protection, either financial or political, to France against the consequences of her impassioned yet methodical folly. Let the United States begin by refusing for the present any more loans. The financial position of the French is so vulnerable that if they are denied further credits, they will be obliged to ameliorate the policy which is so expensive to themselves and so disastrous to Europe.

An American loan saved their credit a year ago, and under the salutary influence of the scare they accepted the Dawes plan and promised to retire from the Ruhr, but in accepting it they did not necessarily agree to give Germany a chance to recover. Their recent behavior and utterances prove that they are still playing it both ways. They propose to condemn Germany to a condition of prolonged or permanent subjection and at the same time to neutralize the inevitable protests and resentment in Germany by persuading the other European powers and the United States to continue, if not to assist, at least to connive at French domination. The assistance or connivance which they receive from this country is financial. Provided they are not granted additional loans, they will certainly fail; and precisely because they need the discipline of failure they should for the present be denied ac-

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cess to the American money market. It is ridiculous for American bankers to lend hundreds of millions to Germany and other nations in the hope of promoting European recovery, and then a few days later to lend hundreds of millions to the neighbor of Germany which will indirectly employ this money in order to prevent the recovery from taking place.

A Plea for Plutocracy

PRESIDENT COOLIDGE, addressing the National Tax Association on inheritance taxes, stated clearly three positions which indicate a fundamental cleavage between conservatives and progressives. He said, "I do not believe that the government should seek social legislation in the guise of taxation." He intimated that the growth of large private fortunes should be not discouraged but encouraged, and therefore that inheritance taxation should be employed only in so far as necessary to collect revenue. And in consequence of these positions he advocated the withdrawal of the federal government from the field of inheritance taxation except in times of emergency, leaving this form of revenue solely to the separate states. With each of these positions we are in profound disagreement.

Taxation is, of course, primarily a means of paying governmental expenses. On this ground the Secretary of the Treasury and other conservatives have argued that it should be levied solely with a view to raising revenue in the easiest way. Like the President, they assume that to use taxation for redistribution of wealth or other social purpose is an irrelevant objective. If social purposes are to be served, let them be accomplished in some more direct fashion. But this is an extremely artificial view of the matter. Why do we have a government at all? What determines what its expenses shall be? Representative government is either a means of accomplishing social purposes or it is nothing. When money is taken from citizens and spent by the government it is taken and spent on the assumption that the government is performing a function for the community which the individual citizens could not perform, or could not perform so well. Every cent of taxation is therefore levied in pursuit of social objects. The police power protects the private accumulation of property on which taxes are paid. Roads serve the creation of the wealth which is taxed. And so on.

A tax apportioned equally among the population without regard to ability to pay would redistribute wealth in favor of the rich because of their greater share in the benefits of government. Government and taxes are essentially a social control over the use of wealth. The social implications of taxation cannot be escaped. The real question is not whether government, and the taxes on which its existence depends, should serve social purposes, but what social purposes they should serve.

This conclusion is unconsciously implied in Mr. Coolidge's second thesis. He believes in the accumulation of large private fortunes. He wants taxation adjusted so far as possible to facilitate their continuation, even after the death of those who "made" them. At no point is the intervention of the state in protection of private wealth more obvious than in its inheritance laws. The almost unlimited power to decree who shall enjoy the use and administration of one's property after one is unable longer to influence mundane affairs is sedulously protected by legislation and courts. This is a benefit distinctly conferred by organized society, and one which society could easily withdraw if it saw fit to do so. A policy not to tax inheritances is therefore a social policy, which Mr. Coolidge is at some pains to justify. He believes that the privilege of passing on property with but little impairment is a necessary incentive to enterprise. He believes that for the government to tax an inheritance is to destroy capital by forcing its sale. And he believes apparently that the enterprises of the nation can better be administered by a comparatively small number of rich men, even if they acquire their power by inheritance, than in any other way.

To provide a competence for children or widows who may not be able to support themselves is obviously a worthy object which cannot safely be denied unless some general social provision for this purpose can be devised. But safeguarding this privilege is a different matter from protecting the inheritance of gigantic fortunes. We gravely doubt how effective this motive for enterprise remains as the size of the fortune increases, and we doubt still more either its individual or social desirability beyond a moderate point. Enterprise is more encouraged than discouraged if the members of each generation are required to make their own way without standing on their ancestors' shoulders. A well-graduated inheritance tax avoids this objection.

As for the "destruction" of capital, Mr. Coolidge is confusing real capital with the money value of capital. If part of an estate must be sold to pay the tax, that fact does not destroy or impair the physical plant and equipment which it may represent, or the administrative organization, or the market for its goods, or the opportunity to do profitable business. What has happened is only that part of its value has been transferred to the government. If the government had accepted bonds or shares in payment of the tax it would merely have taken over part of the income and control of the enterprise from the heir. When it takes cash instead, it accepts a payment which the heir might have received by virtue of the same sale of property which enabled him to pay the tax. The control has been passed over to someone else who had accumulated the purchasing power necessary for the sale. Large sales of this sort might easily depress the prices of property, and if the government were going into inheritance taxation on a scale which would mean confiscation it might have to take the property itself

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instead of cash payments, in order to avoid too great fiscal derangements. But in any case there is no destruction of real capital. The question whether it is wise for the government to raise money in this way is dependent therefore on whether it will make as good use of it as would the individual. Certainly it can do so for a long time to come without impairing the sum of private capital values, by devoting such taxes to pay off the war debt, thus reducing the need for future taxation. After that it may easily find valuable productive enterprises for any surplus.

As for the administration of great industrial enterprises, Mr. Coolidge takes a position in which American popular opinion of any school is unlikely to follow him far. The democratic defense of capitalism is that while it safeguards individual enterprise, it provides equality of opportunity. This defense is shattered if we are to envisage an increasing concentration of wealth passed on by inheritance from generation to generation. Most of us have already given up the idea that a scale of competition can be maintained which gives to any man of ability and industry the chance to build up a successful business of his own. But control of already existing firms is supposed to be open to the ablest contestants. Once this door is definitely closed there is no escape for equalitarian aspirations but social ownership or control. Inheritance taxes, if moderate, help to equalize the opportunity of those who do not inherit. If heavier, they provide one of the best of all possible methods of bringing about social ownership. But deliberately to foster inheritance of large fortunes is to encourage a plutocratic society.

The proposition to leave inheritance taxation solely to the states is indefensible except on the assumption that such taxation is to be discouraged even on the part of the states. Florida has already by constitutional amendment forbidden the imposition of inheritance or income taxes, thus encouraging the settlement of rich men. There is nothing to prevent other states from doing the same. And many enterprises out of which fortunes are made are national in scope; the place of residence of their owners, or the seats of the controlling corporations, or even the location of the plants, are largely irrelevant to the scope of their operations. An enterprise levies tribute on wide areas throughout the nation; the state which can tax it either fails to do so or uses the levy for the benefit of a limited number of the people concerned—those only within its borders. There are numerous confusions and injustices which arise from conflicts of inheritance taxes among states, and between state and federal government. Into these technicalities we cannot here inquire, but it looks like a step away from a solution to abandon the federal tax. Only a national system of federal inheritance taxes can have the proper uniformity and justice, and can lead to the most fruitful use of the proceeds.

Will Protection Help the Farmer?

THE farmers of the north and west are recovering their old zeal for protection, after the lapse of faith that marked the early Progressive movement. Protectionist arguments are now advanced fervently by a great part of the farm press; they appear in the resolutions of the most powerful farmer organizations. The report of the President's Agricultural Conference looks to protection as one of the most potent means for restoring vigor to the industry, and even Mr. Hoover has given the weight of his authority to the protectionist doctrine.

It is nothing new for northern farmers to espouse protection. They supported it unwaveringly from the close of the Civil War down to the hocus pocus of the "revision downward" under the Taft administration. But the earlier protectionism of the farmer was delusive in its arguments and altruistic in its effects. In the eighties and nineties the farmers voted protection for industry with the belief that somehow the increased prices they paid for what they bought would be compensated by the increased demand for their products from the industrial population supported by the tariff. Decade after decade they clung to this fond belief, although the prices of staple agricultural products continued to be set by a world market whose capacity for absorbing and paying for staples was reduced by just such handicaps to trade as the American industrial tariff. The farmer was mulcted going and coming. He got less for his products and paid more for what he needed to buy, and was happy, believing himself the richer for it.

The present generation of farmers is less naïve. It is not so easily convinced that it is good business to subsidize one's customers in the hope that they may then buy more freely. It is out for protection that protects the farmer directly. The new farm protectionists realize that nothing of importance can be accomplished through levying nominal import duties on products we export, like cotton, corn and wheat. They know that the tariff works only when the home price is controlled by the cost of importing an essential part of the supply. And they propose to reorganize our agriculture with a view to reducing the production of staples of which we now have an excess and increasing the production of those in which we show a deficit. Their ideal is the complete disappearance of export surpluses, so that the tariff may operate effectively upon the whole range of agricultural production.

There is no denying that the economic logic of the new agrarian protectionism is better than that of the old. Nevertheless the farmer is destined to discover in the end that he cannot play the protectionist game with industry and come out ahead. To gain the full benefit of protection, industry has found

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itself compelled to control domestic production. However generously the steel industry was subsidized by the tariff, it despaired of certain profits until it succeeded in consolidating so much of the industry as to have production and prices within its control. Not only that; it had to reach back to the control of ore and coke and forward to the control of finished products before it attained to financial security. If the farmers get protection enough on beet sugar, they may make money on beets until overproduction sets in, and the Sugar Trust manages to secure the chief benefit for itself. If the farmers want to insure themselves a profit out of sugar beets, raising the duty is the least of their tasks. They will have to control the acreage, and get possession of the sugar mills and sugar marketing machinery besides. An increased duty on hides will first of all increase the profits of the packers. Are the farmers in a position to make the packers disgorge? Increased duties on wool might help the sheep men, if they could do business on even terms with the American Woolen Company. The same situation obtains in respect to almost every deficit agricultural product it is now proposed to protect. The farmer will have to share any possible gain with some business organization which is better able to look after its interest than he is.

Our most important agricultural imports are sugar, hides, wool, tobacco, vegetable oils. Hides and wool may be produced over a wide area and can hardly be overproduced, in the present circumstances of our national life. They are, however, by-products of beef and mutton, the overproduction of which is a common phenomenon. No substantial general prosperity can be based on such by-products. Sugar production is a tricky business for the plain farmer. The product is so bulky that the lands near the mills gain a huge advantage over those more remote, an advantage which fixes itself in the price of land and its rent, leaving in a wholly unenviable position the working farmer who has to buy or rent the land. As for vegetable oils, our market would absorb a very large domestic product if imports were shut out by the tariff. But there are too many industries between the producer of soy beans or peanuts and the ultimate consumer to leave any assurance of profit to the farmer. As for tobacco, no amount of protection would enable the American grower to produce a satisfactory substitute for the Cuban and Turkish leaf we import. If it could, we should promptly encounter the problem of overproduction.

The farmer who has depended on the world market has suffered severely in recent years as compared with the manufacturer who depends on the domestic market. It does not follow that the world market may not nevertheless be worth conserving and cultivating. The wheat farmer has endured grievous hardships through the fall in the world price, but the potato farmer whose market is domestic has suffered more severely. The raisin growers depend mostly on the domestic market, and would gladly find markets abroad. The cotton grower has had very little reason to grumble about the world market, in spite of the disorganization of consumption following the War.

Yet is it not inevitable that the farmer must accept low pay so long as his products must be sold abroad in competition with those of low standard peoples? The President's Conference argues that he must, and the argument is ceaselessly repeated by the protectionist press. Repetition does not give it validity.

Where is wheat produced more cheaply than in the United States? In India, Russia, Rumania, where the standards are extremely low? No. The export from those countries is a starvation export. If the peasant got enough to eat there would be virtually no surplus for export. Wheat is produced more cheaply in Canada, for the present. The Canadian cost will continue to be less until the Canadian wheat lands are boosted in price to something like our own level.

Our wheat and corn and cotton, our meat products, milk products and preserved fruits will not be driven off the world market because of the competition of low standard countries. Countries of low standards are countries of low efficiency. Our foreign markets suffer not from competition but from poverty. And one reason why they are poor is because industrial protection, especially in the United States, robs vast working populations of employment and purchasing power. If we had cut duties after the War we should have taken an immense volume of industrial products from England, Belgium and Germany, and those countries would have taken immense quantities of food products and raw materials from us.

What our farmers need is not protection but freedom. Not free trade in their own products, but protection for the products of industry, is weakening their economic position. They may be bribed by agricultural protection to continue their support of industrial protection. If they do, they will sooner or later have to acknowledge that they let themselves be bamboozled, gold-bricked.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1925, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK
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Houses of Tomorrow

ON the day that I am sitting down to write this article, Mr. Frank Mann has obligingly provided me with a nice, fresh text. Mr. Mann is Tenement House Commissioner for New York City. His text is contained in a special report he has just published on housing conditions there.

Everyone knows that New York has had a shortage of dwelling quarters since the War. So has every other city. But Mr. Mann now announces that there are about 30,000 vacant apartments in the city.

Does that mean that the housing shortage is now ended? No, it does not. On the contrary, the shortage is still as bad as ever, or worse. New York has thousands of old tenements in which no human being ought to be asked to live. Most of them were officially declared unfit for habitation long ago. As early as 1909, 51,000 of them stood vacant because people very properly refused to live in them. But by 1919 more than 30,000 of these wretched slums were again in use. At the end of 1923, 50,000, or all but about 1,000 of the lot, were filled. They are still filled.

And it isn't only the people living under these wretched conditions of inadequate light and air, antiquated sanitary appliances, heavy fire risk and all the rest of it, who suffer. Those who occupy the newer, more satisfactory houses are frequently little better off. To pay the rents demanded, they are forced to live in a smaller number of rooms than decent minimum standards demand. They take boarders, or sometimes two families occupy a single apartment. They skimp on food, clothing, recreation, in order to meet the relentless demands of the landlord. Municipal health authorities and social workers have repeatedly pointed out the great harm produced by these conditions—harm which must be measured in terms of increased illness, impaired morals, and a huge decrease in the sum of the human happiness enjoyed by the victims.

Where do Commissioner Mann's 30,000 vacant houses come in?

They are, by his own statement, brand new apartments, fairly well built (though both design and construction are certainly far poorer than they ought to be). But they are all built to rent at not less than $20 a room a month. Many of them are $30, $40 or $50.

These prices are out of the reach of the overwhelming mass of New York's population. Sixty-nine percent of the families in that city have a *family* income of $2,500 or less. Only 8 percent receive as much as $5,000. Excluding the huge number of persons whose income is very much less than $2,500, consider the problem presented when the income is at that figure. No family should spend on housing more than 25 percent of what it receives. For an average sized household this means a maximum expenditure of $12.50 a month a room. That is only five-eighths as much as the minimum rental of Commissioner Mann's 30,000 new homes. It is only half as much as is demanded for a great many of them.

In other words, these 30,000 houses are standing vacant because people can't afford to live in them. Under "normal" conditions, some of the 8 percent able to pay these prices would move into the new houses, and rents would go down for the property they had deserted. But in New York, it hasn't happened. Either more construction has been completed than the available number of well-to-do persons could occupy, or these well-to-do persons haven't cared to move.

All this building has gone on under a famous state tax exemption law, which remitted the taxes on new residential buildings for a period of ten years, up to a maximum valuation of $5,000 on each apartment or detached house. This amounts to a subsidy of roughly $2,000 a home, and it was supposed that it would produce building in great quantities, would reduce rents, and solve the housing problem for the poor.

But it hasn't. As Commissioner Mann has revealed, the entire building trade at once turned in to produce that housing for the rich which is the most profitable to create. Even when construction has been inferior, the profiteering landlord has stepped in and demanded his $20 a room. In western Europe, where more than 1,000,000 homes* have been erected since the War with state subsidy of one sort or another, it has been the general custom to prohibit profiteering in the rental or sale of houses thus aided. Such an idea was too "paternalistic" for New York; and the results are as shown.

All competent authorities on housing agree that in New York City the law of supply and demand has completely broken down, in so far as providing decent homes at reasonable prices is concerned. People are as badly off as before; and, measured on any sensible scale of human health and happiness, they are very badly off indeed. Those who know most of their situation are most urgent in demanding that it be remedied, are most insistent that you cannot build an enduring civilization on a citizenship forced to live under these conditions.

As a matter of fact, even the rich in New York City live in a fashion which is an amazingly long way from being really desirable. It is a safe assertion that if the dwellers in Park Avenue's

* The number of dwellings in the leading countries down to the close of 1923 is: Great Britain, 404,641; Germany, 369,643; Holland, 140,366; Italy (estimated), 40,000; France (estimated), 30,000; Czecho-Slovakia, 35,524; Belgium, 32,892.

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elongated packing boxes could ever see a really modern multi-family house—of the type designed by Andrew J. Thomas, for example—it would be hard to satisfy them again with their gilded dog-kennel makeshifts.

In this morning's mail I was invited to buy an apartment in a new, all-coöperative house now being erected in mid-Manhattan. The purchase price ranges from $37,000 to $76,000, the annual carrying charges from $6,000 to $12,500, depending on the height of each apartment from the ground. The present proprietors proudly point out that all the windows except those of one room look out upon a court which is partly nine feet wide, partly eighteen! This situation is not unusual. It is typical.

Getting back to the question of the poor man, whose problem is economic: is there any answer to his difficulty?

There are any quantity of answers; but there are very few with which we need concern ourselves if we have the opportunist's itch to "get something done" within a reasonable time—say, a generation. That restriction eliminates the socialist's panacea, the single taxer's panacea, the panacea of the engineer who would reduce the population of New York by forcing three or four million people to go and live somewhere else.

Grappling with the problem in its lowest and most immediate terms, what do we find? We find it is possible to build highly desirable homes in and near New York City today, on a sound business basis, to be rented or sold at prices which the $2,500-a-year man can afford to pay. Instead of occupying 70 percent of the land, which is permitted by the barbarous present New York law, these homes, even when apartment houses, need occupy only 25 or 35 percent of the land, leaving the remainder free for gardens, playgrounds, tennis courts, etc. It is possible to have good-sized rooms, all of which have cross-ventilation. It is possible to provide every modern appliance in plumbing and in labor-saving devices. The construction can be of the finest quality, fireproof and permanent.

To bring about this miracle, only four conditions need to be met. They are:

First, the operation must be conducted on a large scale. Homes for at least one hundred families, and preferably five hundred, must be erected simultaneously.

Second, the land, which must obviously be purchased in large units, should not be too dear.*

Third, the investors who finance the undertaking must be satisfied to receive a good deal less than "all the traffic will bear." While the earning power of the new type of decent housing is oftentimes surprisingly large, for safety's sake the return on the investment ought to be limited to, say, 6 percent—5 percent interest and 1 percent amortization.

Fourth, the architect must know his business. One of the painful facts about apartment house construction is that so many of them do not. Frequently, of course, no architect is used at all, and houses are produced by an even more ignorant building contractor from standardized plans.

How can these specifications be realized? There are several types of approach which are worth enumeration.

One of them, which might be called benevolent industrial feudalism, may now be seen in operation in an admirable group of new houses just finished in Bayonne, New Jersey, by the Mr. Thomas mentioned above, for the Bayonne Housing Corporation. That organization is a joint enterprise created and financed by the needs of big industrial companies with factories in Bayonne—Standard Oil, International Nickel, Pacific Coast Borax, American Radiator, Babcock & Wilcox, Tidewater Oil, Vacuum Oil, etc. Believing quite sincerely that workingmen do better work when their living conditions are satisfactory, these men joined in commissioning Mr. Thomas to produce apartments which are incomparably superior to anything available to workingmen—or anybody else—in Bayonne, whether at twice or at ten times the rentals asked. Only 36 percent of the land is covered. The great inner courtyard, charmingly landscaped, is 104 by 338 feet—which compares rather favorably with the eighteen feet one way, other dimension not stated, offered by my $76,000 coöperative friends in New York! There is a playground where, it is planned, a nurse will watch over the children at a cost of only a few cents a week for each family. These homes, far more healthful and beautiful than the packing-box apartments of the rich, rent for $9 to $10.25 a month a room. That permits a perfectly respectable profit on the investment of the Bayonne Housing Corporation.*

A second form of the movement for improved housing is to be found in the development of the City Housing Corporation called Sunnyside, situated in Long Island City.

This enterprise has the immediate and marked difference that the houses are not rented, but sold. The population is much smaller per acre than in the Thomas projects, desirable though the latter are. The City Housing Corporation's architect,

* Andrew J. Thomas, the famous architect of improved types of multi-family houses, and a pioneer in the fight to provide decent homes for people with small incomes, denies this. He declares that by taking advantage of the economy of modern design and large scale operation, it is possible to go into the heart of New York's slums, tear them down block by city block, and erect new apartments, covering only one-half the ground area or less, in no way overcrowded, and to be rented or sold at a good profit, at not more than $10 or $11 a month a room. My faith in Mr. Thomas is so great that if he says he can work miracles, I agree that he can. Nevertheless, even he will concede that the miracle is easier where ground values are reasonable.

* It should be noted that this is *not* a company housing project. The participating companies are only investors in the corporation, without any power to dictate to the tenants. No person can be removed from his apartment because he has gone on strike or has in any other way made himself persona non grata to his employers.

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Mr. Clarence Stein, the brilliant young director of the New York State Commission of Housing and Regional Planning, has worked out an admirable scheme for a series of detached and semi-detached one- and two-family houses and small three-story apartment houses, built around the sides of a hollow square. Each such project occupies one entire block. The buildings cover only 28 percent of the land area; and the central garden, as in the Thomas project, is parked and landscaped and contains a tennis court, wading pool, playground, etc. A large part of this central garden is deeded in perpetuity to community use. As to the remainder, the purchasers sign an agreement that it shall be shared in common for the next forty years. It is the theory of Mr. Alexander M. Bing, the successful New York real estate operator to whose intelligence, public spirit and generosity this enterprise is due, that if the people in the houses have not learned to coöperate in forty years, the effort to persuade them to do so might well be abandoned.

The City Housing Corporation is by no means a charitable enterprise. Its profits are limited to 6 percent, and it is already paying dividends on that basis. Because of the economies of right design and large-scale operation, it is able to sell its houses and apartments, after a first payment of a few hundred dollars, at a rate which does not exceed $11 a month a room. This sum includes interest, amortization and all expense of operation. As fast as the payments are made on one group of houses, the funds are reinvested in additional building. As I write, the first 128 families have already moved in, and homes for the second 128 are rapidly nearing completion.

Building good homes for people of modest means and making it possible for them to become stable citizens through home ownership are certainly important; but I cannot help thinking, after making a visit to Sunnyside, and seeing what is going on there, that for city dwellers, the open green lawns, fresh air, sunshine, and the chance to participate in a real community are more important still. What Mr. Bing and his associates are producing is in effect a series of seventeenth century New England villages, each grouped around its common. For the dwellers in a city slum tenement, the new social opportunities and responsibilities which come with life at Sunnyside must be rather like those for a man, paralyzed, deaf, blind, and suddenly enabled to walk, hear and see.

A third type of progress comes when the people themselves coöperate to build new apartment houses or new suburban homes for their own use. This sort of enterprise is frequent in Europe, and particularly in the Scandinavian countries. All the economies and advantages of the Thomas type of apartment or the City Housing Corporation community are also reflected in coöperative ventures. But whether we like it or not, we must admit that at present the average American does not seem ready for activities of this sort. He has not caught the technique of coöperation which in several ways is such an enormously important feature of the economic life of the laboring class in a dozen other countries. To induce five hundred American families to join in an apartment house undertaking requires the energy of Napoleon and the persuasiveness of Franklin. It is no accident that the most conspicuous success of this sort in the region of New York should have been built by a company of Finns.

There are, of course, a large number of so-called coöperatively-owned apartments in New York City; but the phrase has little meaning. These buildings are put up by speculators and subsequently sold to the tenants at prices usually very much higher than they would bring on the open market. The new owners in the long run probably make money; almost anybody profits by getting out of the clutches of the landlords: but home ownership on this scale is decidedly a game which only the well-to-do can play.

The difficulty with all the plans of the sort I have been describing is in getting the money with which to build in the first place. I doubt if any group of men is more completely without sense of social responsibility than those who control the great lending institutions of New York, who in the ordinary course of things finance whatever new building is done. Retreating behind a cloud of words about "duty to their depositors," they almost invariably refuse to aid any enterprise which does not promise the largest possible profit to themselves. Try to suggest that they ought to be interested in the conditions which result from their laissez faire policy and they will laugh you out of court.

Here and there you will find an enlightened exception like Walter Stabler of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, or John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who is the moving spirit behind the Bayonne project; once in a generation you develop an Alexander M. Bing, willing to put his own money and to demand that his friends shall put theirs, into a 6 percent enterprise. But compared to the need, the sum of all such activities is as a postage stamp on the side of the Woolworth Building. Since it is clearly evident that no other source is available, I believe that the state of New York should lend money at low rates of interest to be used in the construction of new houses of the type I have described above, with a legal restriction that such houses are never to be sold or rented at profiteering prices.

Since, moreover, such operations can only be inaugurated on a large scale which requires ample ground room, and since the land speculator has interested himself in almost every available square foot of soil within fifty miles of New York in any direction, condemnation proceedings should be authorized for housing purposes, making it possible to buy at a fair valuation all the property included in a projected site.

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Enormous as is the advance marked by such projects as I have been describing, I should not be honest if I did not add that in my judgment they are still a long way from being even approximately perfect. I hope to live long enough to see a new city created somewhere in America in which the community permanently retains title to every foot of the ground, granting the householder only a very long lease—a city in which all the "unearned increment" which results from the pressure of population at that spot, and from nothing else, goes into the coffers of the community as a whole. Only by this means can you make sure that the ideal plan which is laid down for the community in the beginning will be preserved; that the residential section will not, for no earthly reason but the greed of the speculators, be turned into a hideous business district, while the original business district becomes a Sargasso Sea of dead rot. Only thus can you make certain that the workers will not be penalized with high rents for the natural necessity which demands that they shall have a roof over their heads.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

So This Is Peace!

AT Innsbruck I began my trip into Austria; at Innsbruck, where the high street seems ever about to be overwhelmed by the mountains that hang above it like a breaking wave; where in the little church silver kings and queens, taller than common men and women, stand guarding an emperor's sepulchre. It is as fair as an inland town may be. I know none fairer, save Granada and Salt Lake City. Nevertheless, there it was; that tiresomeness, that complicated tiresomeness, arising out of the recent event, cause of so much trouble and expense, which we call the War.

There were two painful ways in which it intruded itself on the pleasantness of the place. To begin with, there was the little matter of the names of the principal squares and streets. Painted out are the old names; I cannot say what they were, for they belonged to the commemorative sort that once heard are never remembered. But painted in are new names that even without the pricking emphasis of red paint and the emblem of the Republican eagle would mark one's attention. For they are names drawn from that territory which was transferred from Austria to Italy under the Peace Treaty. The square by the station is now called the Sud-Tirol Platz. "I am still," says Innsbruck, in effect, "the capital of the Tyrol." And the streets around it are named after the towns in that lost region, which are given in the old Austrian and not the new Italian way, as Boden and Meran, instead of Bolsano and Merano.

This is sad rankling stuff to get under the skin of a nation. It can in time rot away its life, for it turns all its spiritual forces to daydreaming. Youth, instead of harnessing its energies to the arts and sciences and industries, will indulge in unprofitable fantasies concerning the recovery of that stolen region. Maturity will consider late nights at the tavern sanctified if there has been much shaking of fists southward at Italy. The nation's songs, instead of celebrating the eternal joys and sorrows of mankind and thereby attaining beauty, will limit themselves by harping on this temporary maladjustment.

It is a pity that victory involved such a detrackment of a nation's energies.

And the other trace of the tiresomeness of afterwar was the surliness of the hotel servants. They were the most listless, the most unhelpful, the most grizzling that I have ever encountered in any country. A bath was run on with an air of bitter resentment against the foreign fool who had ordered it. This surliness is not peculiar to Innsbruck but may be found all over Austria. And the explanation came to me with its acutest example at a town named Linz, which is on the Danube. There I rang for hot water, and was answered by the most despondent slut that I have ever seen. The abstract qualities, despondency and sluthood, must have been amazed to find so much of themselves compressed into one human being. She appeared not to like me. Indeed, she regarded me with a loathing such as I have rarely before excited, at any rate in complete strangers who have not had time to know my quality.

It was baffling until one read a certain notice on the walls which begged one to remember the servants since they were paid no wages and depended on tips. Now, this was no tourist centre. The Austrian scale of tipping is low; a visitor who stayed the night would probably leave her the equivalent of fourpence or fivepence. And the cost of living is as high as in England. The slut at Linz was, I fear, not getting much out of life; and the Innsbruck servants, though they had probably not made such a hard deal as she had, were still not on velvet. If they were sullen it was not because they were so by nature. The Austrian is, in fact, one of the pleasantest of creatures, a link between the Teuton and the Latin; better-mannered and gentler than any German I have ever encountered, with a squarer integrity than the average Italian. But these people, and I imagine most people in Austria who do not belong to the definitely prosperous classes or to the peasant class which has that solid hold on life that is given by a potato patch, are suffering from what Mr. Graham Wallas has called "baulked disposition." They are not actually starving, but none of their appetites

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are fully satisfied. They never have really sufficient or really good food. They have not adequate or suitable or pleasing clothing. They are not getting enough fun out of existence. Therefore they face life peevishly, whiningly, like an undernourished child.

How amiable the Austrian is, how agreeable the texture of Austrian life, I learned more fully at the holiday resort I visited in the Saltzkammergut, a village on the edge of a lake as lovely as Ullswater. The village itself was beautiful, with clean white houses of great age and dignity, with apricot trees hung with golden fruit, and gardens in which an incredibly naïve sense of decoration planted among the flowers frosted and colored balls such as we use on Christmas trees. Its population was like that, naïve and gay. It was always pleasant to go into the little shops even though they had absolutely refrained from stocking anything for the summer visitors. This may have been largely due to the difficulty of getting credit for small trade in an economically shattered country, but it was certainly due in part to the inefficiency, or rather lack of interest in practical affairs, which is an undoubted characteristic of the Austrian people today. But they have, God bless them, qualities that more than make up for that defect. It was a fine experience to meet the leader of this community, the village banker, a handsome and jolly old gentleman of a physical robustness that took one back to some more heroic age ("I will tell you ze cure for ze influenza. Yes! You go to bed—you take with you a bottle of cognac—you drink so much [indicating a good half-pint] you schlaf—you wake a well man!"), who was evidently living life according to the highest principles and with the immensest gusto, which is perhaps as good a mixture as one may conceive.

Gusto, that is the Austrian quality that makes the nation so admirable, so worthy of preservation. I saw a fine example of it in the day's journey down the Danube from Linz to Vienna, which is as beautiful a way of approaching a great city as may be imagined.

We had on board a brass band consisting of unemployed workmen from a factory which had been obliged to shut down with a stock in hand of three hundred motor-cars and eight thousand bicycles which could not be sold against the German opposition.

Their circumstances were depressing enough. Yet nothing could have surpassed the cheerfulness, the shining air of dispersing a treat with which, as we drew near to a stopping place, they raised their instruments and saluted the inhabitants with a tune. And the response of the villages was as overbrimmingly amiable. They ran out onto the quays and cheered; they waved handkerchiefs; innkeepers ran out of inns waving napkins; servants ran out waving towels and dish-cloths; a bed-making housewife leaned from an upper window waving an entire sheet. I have never been in a country where so small an incident could have caused so much laughter and good feeling; which is to say that spiritually Austria is a rich nation that should not be laid waste.

How problematic is its survival can be realized in Vienna. That is a lugubrious city. It must in the past have been a wonderful city. How wonderful one realized at a performance of Der Rosenkavalier at the Opera, which must have made the stars sing together, so marvelous was it that imperfect man should have produced anything so perfect. But today its streets are shabby, and full of languid gossip about misery. The great tragedies are over, of course; starvation, suicide and so on have cleared the boards of the absolutely resourceless. But there is still an abundance of stories that make the gooseflesh come. There was a civil servant's widow I heard of, such an elderly lady as in England would have her little flat in West Kensington, and be very happy at five o'clock with her tea and toast and purring pussy. Nowadays her pension amounts to thirty shillings a month. She is an inmate of an old lady's home. Twice a week they have a little, just a little, frozen meat. Alas, for the great men who dream Cæsarian dreams in a non-Cæsarian age! At the end the alteration to the map is not the one intended and it works out cruel hard on Aunt Matilda.

But even more dreadful, because destructive of one's hope in the future, is the helplessness of the people. They strike one in the streets as supine-spirited and lifeless. They will let anybody in uniform, even in the least glorious uniform, bully and hustle them. I have seen a tram-conductor insult and push about his fares in a way which in England would have led to his detention by the police as a suspected lunatic. That this inertia runs right through the community, even to those in charge of commercial affairs of the highest importance, is devastatingly illustrated by one fact of ill omen for the country. The chief economic hope of Austria lies in the development of its tourist traffic, which ought to be easy. There is beautiful scenery, there are clean and comfortable hotels. Yet Austrian inefficiency drives away the traveller. The railway stations of Vienna are filthy, their organization artless and involved. The trains are often vile, in a way that is not to be excused on the plea that rolling stock has gone in repayment of reparations. I returned from Vienna to Innsbruck by a beautiful mountain route, which gave me as good a twelve hours of scenery as I have ever had in my life. Yet the journey was an ordeal. Think of an offensive smell; double it; and you may get something like the reek that infested the carriages. It was incredible that a train could have been sent out of a metropolitan terminus in such a state of rococo richness of filth.

This incompetence, this languid dealing with the task in hand is to be found everywhere; even in places that one associates with rather snapping

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efficiency. I went to one of the largest banks of Vienna and I was received charmingly, but I was kept waiting two hours in a stuffy room packed with tourists. When at last anger came upon me and I lifted up my voice it was explained to me that the clerk who had to fill in the receipt forms had been for a holiday for six weeks, and had got out of the habit of doing any work. "He *does* seem slow, doesn't he? But it will only be so at first——"

You will find politics handled with the same debilitated touch in the conversation of the middle classes. They deplore the Revolution, which is natural enough, considering that the régime it introduced is highly uncomfortable for them. The taxation imposed by the Reds has put up prices to an intolerable height, particularly in the case of clothing; a trumpery hat that would cost four or five shillings at a London drapery store costs at least the equivalent of a pound in Vienna. But when one learns that these taxes are needed chiefly for necessities such as housing and the treatment of sick children, one cannot blame the Reds or consider them as more than Pinks. In any case the middle-class Austrian does not propose to take any steps towards controlling the situation. "These workmen!" he says petulantly, but he leaves them to it. And always they are wistfully longing for the restoration of the monarchy, though they will admit they know nothing of the dead Emperor Franz that contradicts the terrible epitaph, Ni grand cœur, ni grand esprit, and they cannot suggest a living emperor. The longing is therefore as futile as can be. Yet how human, how understandable it is! For in the old days when a Hapsburg sat on the throne they all had their allotted functions in the state, performed them and were happy.

And there, I think, lies the moral of Austria for the visitor. It teaches him the right way to use the term, Utopian. For it has been the fashion to describe as Utopian dreamers those who believe in the democratic state which gives all its individuals full opportunities for self-government and lets them rise as they can; and by this is meant that they are hoping for the establishment of a social order which is pleasant in itself but which will not endure the stresses and strains of reality. What hope can there be of building a stable community out of units that have their minds unsettled by non-vocational education, that are made uppish by a lively sense of their rights, that have no conviction that it behooves them to stay put in the station to which they were born? Obviously the sounder way is the old oligarchic system, in which the individual born and bred to fill a particular place in society and stay there, is like a brick in a solid wall. That is the reason and logic of it. Yet when one visits Austria one perceives that it is not so, and that the true Utopian is the believer in oligarchies. For they may far more justly be described as pleasant in themselves but unable to endure the stresses and strains of reality. Many types of mind are far happier in this sort of community than they could ever be under a democracy; the unimaginative man who was a civil servant or army officer in pre-war Austria must have known the contentment of a well-tended child in its nursery. But the concussion of international disaster ends all that. For if one knocks down a wall there is nothing left but scattered bricks; but if a structure consisting of living units is subjected to the same force, dispersed, its units will reassemble and find some new way of cohering again into a communal body. The latter process has happened in more highly democratized Germany. But in Austria one sees, at the moment, only scattered bricks; but such beautiful, sun-mellowed, moss-grown bricks that one cannot help preferring the spectacle to that of Germany

REBECCA WEST.

(This is the first of two articles by Miss West. The second will appear in an early issue.)

Notes on Modern Literature

III.

ONE of the symptoms which is least reassuring in some of the finest of modern literature is its weakness for falling back on the past —that is, for parodying or reproducing the culture of some other period. I do not mean the kind of borrowing and imitation of which all great literature is full—the kind of debt that Dante owes to Virgil. I mean the tendency of certain modern writers to abandon the sensibility of their own time altogether and to try to feel in terms of the past. The Romantics discovered the Middle Ages and awakened the historic sense and the nineteenth century historians combined a scientific criticism with the romantic imagination; but it is in Flaubert's novels that the sort of thing I mean makes its first complete appearance. Flaubert compensated himself for the dreariness of modern France by attempting to live again in the barbarities of ancient Carthage, and one of his most interesting books—Trois Contes—is simply a set of three characteristic lives from three different civilizations. We are led to draw the conclusion that life has steadily declined in nobility and splendor from the pagan world, through the Christian, to contemporary France. The Parnassian poets in their romantic thirst for color, checked by a scientific conscience for objectivity and accuracy, had much in common with Flaubert, and Hérédia wrote in Les Trophées what might almost be called a sonneteer's outline of history. But Anatole France, who had begun with these Parnassian exercises, passed on to more elaborate costume-pieces in prose, with more philosophy and more feeling. From Thaïs to Les Dieux ont Soif, he followed Flaubert in devoting a large part of his creative career to the reconstruction of perished civilizations—(so much is he ob-

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sessed by the historic sense that when he comes to write about his own period he calls his novel Histoire Contemporaine)—and, like Flaubert, he leaves us with a vivid impression that there is something intrinsically inferior about our own. In England Pater was preoccupied less successfully with much the same sort of thing.

Now, in a later generation, we have the biographies of Mr. Strachey who, like Anatole France, has made himself a perfect instrument for recording the atmospheres of previous periods; Mr. Joyce's Ulysses, with its apparatus of parodies and its parallel to the Odyssey; and the poetry of Mr. Eliot, Mr. Pound and Miss Marianne Moore—of which so much of the beauty depends on the poet's success in catching the tone of some earlier poet or in finding some apposite quotation from the past to dignify the emotions of the present. The point of view in Ulysses and The Waste Land is really much the same as in Flaubert's Trois Contes: we are invited to contrast the present unfavorably with the past. The most distinguished of our poets seem almost invariably to confess the failure of the world in which they live to stimulate adequately their imaginations; they are driven to the literatures of earlier civilizations which they suppose to have been more picturesque or animated with more interesting ideals. At the other end of the literary line, this Alexandrianism is counterbalanced with modern journalism, which, in novel or essay or poem, speaks to the modern man about his own world with so little appreciation of what has been said before that it is most of it valueless as literature. But, in the meantime, the more highly developed artists, instead of being able to make use of their literary ancestors as Dante or Milton did of his—to assimilate and build upon—are likely to find themselves merely warming their hands at the fire of their predecessors' lives, as we burn coal to release the sunlight stored up by ancient forests.

EDMUND WILSON.

Night Wind

Listen! The long, dark winds are roaring by,
Loud with old woes that gather more and more,
Old sorrows that go crowding down the sky
In a lost flood that tumbles on no shore;
Not Œdipus himself, not man, not woman
Shall name a grief here, but is gulped and drowned
What pitiful sorrow, single and sweet and human
But is too frail a crying in this sound?

Come, stand here where the wind is going over,
Now, when the rush is full upon your face,
If you be king, or woman, or a lover,
Come, pour your little grief out in this place,
And cry your little cry . . . and see it tossed
High on the roaring flood . . . and drowned . . . and lost.

DAVID MORTON.

Native Air

"TIS the beauty, not the strangeness, turns the traveller's heart to stone," said Wordsworth. In places foreign to us we are moved both by the unknown beauty and the unfamiliar—moved and stimulated. Released from the accustomed scenes of our own environment, we drink eagerly at new streams. We are thirsty for difference, for "otherness," as D. H. Lawrence calls it. We crave new flavors and in them we get a renewed sense of wonder—one of the most precious perceptions in life and one that fades gradually away, and is lost to us among familiar scenes and early surroundings—grown so natural to us that we cease to take notice of them any more save, perhaps, to revolt at their sameness.

But it has become a belief of mine that no matter how far from them we travel, nor how deeply we drink of all the waters of the earth, there is in us all a tide that will carry us back to our own corner on this earth. Everyone, sooner or later, must experience the return of the native to the native.

And though it may be the beauty and the strangeness that move us when away from home, it is neither of these that moves us more profoundly still when we return. For, as one is neither beautiful nor strange—to oneself, and wonder is not possible because one is so used to oneself—yet one guards one's common life unrelaxingly. It is so very precious in spite of its ordinary quality. So it is with the native air in which we grew up. It may not be in itself either beautiful or strange, yet, for us, it has some life-giving power. Let me tell of my own experience of this which must be a common one to all who search for real values.

After a childhood and youth in New York state, after twenty-five years of red brick, cast iron, stone sidewalks set down in a nature entirely domesticated and tamed to our purposes and seemingly all contributive to our own industriousness (I remember I always felt the Hudson river was there to carry the boats to Albany!) imagine, then, the contrast found in living in the hills of Tuscany in a fourteenth-century villa, and near enough to Florence to move in and out easily every day. Here it really was the beauty that seemed to turn the heart to stone!

It was all beauty. There wasn't a reminder anywhere of the prosaic and practical life of New York state. There was nothing about one but beauty and poetry. The very air was full of significance and pregnant memory. It was heavy with the spirits of the beautiful dead people who in life had moved there in a rich life—dressed always in lovely clothes, and who had never heard of business. The historical past lived on and one dwelt there in it and somehow living there in that place that was all background I made it mine and took it into myself, and I carry it with me yet.

And it went on contributing so to me for years and years. The villa itself lived a quiet, deep life

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of its own, brooding and beautiful, seemingly permeated with many fierce and gentle spirits. And the garden, leaning over the hill of olives, hushed and elegant, was like a precious vessel made to hold the ashes of the beloved dead.

Once in the midst of my life there came a man, an artist, to see us from home. Looking about him he said:

"It doesn't seem real! It's like a boy's dream!" But what he felt didn't seem real to me. It sounded like the voice of New York state.

So for ten years.

Then came a time when we had to think of schools for John.

What a wrench! Anyway, we, as you might say, dug ourselves out of the magical atmosphere and started for New York. I remember sitting on the boat all the way across with my back to the bow, the tears running freely. I tried to make John sit there with me, facing back to Italy. "It's ugly, it's hideous over there! You'll hate it! It's not like Florence," I whispered to him over and over. But as we neared New York and the high buildings began to form out of the mists, though his knees were facing Italy his eyes were turned over his shoulder towards the West, and: "*I* don't think it's ugly," he said. Then I felt my heart turn away from it still more.

Very soon after the business of landing we were motoring out of the city. Then it was that *the native returned.*

For (surprise like the coming of first love!), out of those pavements and red bricks, out of that cast iron and from those inexpressive trees and the weary, inarticulate grasses, borne on the metallic air, arose a living and assuaging current. It invaded the deepest, most hidden part of one's being and, claiming one for its own, it took possession.

Then back, back from the far, fanciful flights of the spirit returned the soul to its native air! Back from the travelling and exploring—from multiple identifications with other lives and places, the soul returned to sink submissively into its own soil, more fulfilled than ever in the gardenia-scented Italian garden. And the heart opened in expanding recognition and the silver cord was loosed. And it had nothing to do with beauty or strangeness, this beautiful experience. New York state did it!

And that it may not be thought that this happened so because "Italy is dead," or because "Italy belongs to the past," let me tell something more about it.

A few years passed and it came about that I was living in the Southwest, in New Mexico. Here it is the strangeness as well as the beauty that causes the heart to contract sharply. Nature there is so strong that one has to be on one's guard not to be absorbed by it. There the historical background is not in evidence—yet the sense of an illimitable past is present to the perceptions. An archaic past. Still alive there and ruling the ether. Man has not overpowered nature, nor bent her to his utilities. All the natural things seem to have intact a living, breathing, elemental life of their own. The trees almost seem to speak could one but catch their utterance, and the incredibly starry mountain streams really seem to laugh and chatter. The animals have a pristine, shy, intense life, all untamed in them. And the sacred mountain near which I lived truly seemed to have a conscious life of its own, so changing were its moods, so responsive it was to every wind and weather. I have never seen it look twice the same, this mountain, and always it carried the secret life of its shrines, its ever-burning sacred fires, nobly, and with an almost terribly austere purpose.

In the clarity of those altitudes the higher air filled one with a curious elation that rarely fell to the level of commonplace experience. The altitude tinged life subtly, enhancing ordinary affairs into higher keys and colors, and deepened the psychic life.

Indeed, one must be aware of the altitude in that place for because of it strange things come to pass in people, to each according to his essential nature. And this is known and admitted by all who live there, so that occasionally when there is "a shooting up" at a dance in the village, or some one runs amuck in another way, or some one else paints a very good picture, shoulders are shrugged and "It's the altitude!" they say!

What wonder permeates this place! What strangeness! And for its beauty it is hard to find words to tell of it. Form and color are selected and massed together there as in no other nature that I have ever seen. I have never experienced such deep æsthetic pleasure anywhere else. It was of this country that Leo Stein said that he had never known such beauty on earth except in early Chinese paintings—and that he had never believed it could live outside of art!

Oh, lovely land! Hung in those upper spaces of this world where yet no earthly tarnish has in any way defiled! Aloof and apart, wearing a secret, noble smile, and knowing of other ways than those of New York state.

But again the curious miracle upon the return to the native! For even after years spent there in the midst of the wonder that never fades, of straining for a message that is there in the air but never quite to be caught, to come back again from that crystal light and breathe this metallic and rather sooty air with its dark glisten, and to experience again the invasion of this familiar assuaging spirit of place and to be glad for it! Certainly there is wonder enough in this!

In this wilderness of red bricks and cast iron, among these cubes and rectangles, arises again that quite involuntary lovely feeling of atonement and response.

Perhaps it need not take half a lifetime for everyone to find out that there are certain authentic,

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involuntary activities deep down in all of us that will have their way. No matter how wilfully one will ride life seeking to master it—seeking to hew out a new curve to the cultural pattern, seeking to complete one's self and achieve new faculties, adding to one's quota of taste and knowledge (all for individualism and the world well lost!)—still at the long last one must make acknowledgment to deeper urges than any of these. For deepest of all lie buried in us those great cosmic impulses of natural attraction with, and affinity for, the earth.

I will admit that I wish I had to make acknowledgment to another affinity than my own! I suppose almost anyone would rather have a natural rapport with Rome than with Buffalo, New York! And yet maybe it is the usual thing to love, and to want to love, away from one's home. A young artist in the theatre who concerns himself with making the most sumptuous settings for kings and great courtesans, said to me not long ago, "You know, it's a queer thing, but when I go back home and go up that mean little wood road, and pass the cemetery that is so dingy it would make you weep (it's called Plumber and Palmers' field!) and I get to that house, all worn out with its mustard-colored paint nearly gone, well, I feel so comfortable, it's like nothing else in the world to me."

There it is—and if it's wonder we want, there's enough to marvel at in the difference between what we would choose and what wins our submission.

It may seem queer to some, but to anyone who has felt it there is material for lyric song in the occasional, safe return from travels and adventures in far places, to the reviving embrace of New York state!

MABEL DODGE LUHAN.

Washington Notes

EVERY now and then a series of low groans is heard over here. After a slight search, it is found they emanate from some obscure Capitol corner, where a few grieving Democrats gather together and moan over the decadent condition of their party and wonder what can be done about it. They have been doing this sort of thing off and on ever since this short session of Congress began in December, and have, so far, advanced in only one direction—that is, they think they have discovered the fundamental trouble—to wit, the Democratic party has no effective means of spreading propaganda.

Of course, without such means, it is an exceedingly difficult job for any political organization to keep red-blooded and vigorous. Unquestionably, the present Democratic pallor is due to paucity of publicity, and the amazing thing is that Democratic leaders in the Senate should have been so long in grasping the extent to which the Republicans have seized upon the channels of publicity and made them their own. To a certain degree, it has always been true that the majority of the newspapers in the country were inherently Republican, but never in our political history has the press seemed so solidly set behind one political party as it is today back of the Republicans. When the real facts and figures are considered, I do not wonder Democratic leaders seem depressed and discouraged over the outlook. It would be different if, after having grasped the situation, they could do something to improve it, but there seems nothing to do—no practical way out. In these days of high mortality among newspapers, establishing new ones is a desperate undertaking, involving millions of dollars and requiring both brains and courage. The Democratic party is dismally short in all these commodities. Hence, the only thing left is to gather together in the corners over here and groan.

It is, however, interesting to note the remarkable way the newspapers, in the past two years, have fallen into the Republican column, and to speculate on the extraordinary luck of Mr. Coolidge, the presidential candidate and President, to whom, perhaps, more than any in our time, such support is most essential, in having it come to him and his party in such overwhelming proportions.

It is not only the small town newspapers which have become standardized Republican organs. Always, the great bulk of these have absorbed their political inspiration from Republican headquarters, and been eager recipients of the canned news and editorials sent out from here. But now, to a far greater extent than anyone active in politics can recall, the metropolitan daily press and the monthly and weekly periodicals, with mass circulation, are thoroughly Republicanized. Newspapers such as the Chicago Tribune and the Kansas City Star, which, in the Roosevelt days, battled so bitterly against standpat and hidebound Republican conservatism, and others, like the Philadelphia North American, which gave to the Progressive cause the most wholehearted and enthusiastic support, are now in the first rank of the Republican regiment, as eloquent in defense of the extreme conservatism of the Coolidge régime as the New York Herald-Tribune, and as eager to swallow and endorse every reactionary appointment and policy as the Curtis publications themselves, daily, weekly, and monthly.

Add to this the puzzling, mysterious, but extremely earnest truckling of the Hearst chain toward Mr. Coolidge, to which I have from time to time referred in this column, and a really amazing situation is revealed. It is no wonder Democratic leaders are discouraged when they analyze it. They look into state after state, and find their party without a single outright, upstanding organ. In others, they find the Democratic spokesman swamped by the circulation of the Republican group, unable to make its voice heard above the chorus. They look around Washington, and find the so-called "free lance writers," the purveyors of syndicated articles, and the radio political broadcasters, without exception, with definite administration leanings, and frequently Mayflower guests. Altogether, the "channels of publicity" are more completely "sewed up" than they ever have been. So long as this condition maintains, it isn't possible to make criticism of this administration "stick" with the great bulk of the people, whose sole source of information is a newspaper, and whose idea of a well spent evening is a visit to the movies.

As to the cause of the overwhelming press support achieved by the Republicans, as I once before pointed out, it is basically produced by the hope, through Mr. Coolidge, of the enactment of the Mellon tax reduction bill, that would be enormously welcome not only to the incorporated and wealthy newspapers, but to the individually wealthy

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proprietors of these papers. There is also the fact that in recent years the grip of the great business interests in the country on things generally has tightened, and the bulk of the newspaper owners are in one way or another, through banks or business, allied with, dependent upon, and colored by these interests. The banks in the small towns reflect the thought of the banks in the big towns. The controlling powers in business and finance are now, and always have been, strongly Republican, and distrustful of Democrats. In the course of years through intangible pressure and almost unconsciously this weight has told and the press as it has prospered and grown rich more and more has settled into the hands of stolid, stodgy types of conservative business men, whose whole idea is to keep things exactly as they are, because that means prosperity for them. Hearst, in the past, regularly used to make the charge against his journalistic colleagues and he was right. That makes it the more amusing to see him now in step with them.

By the time this appears in print, the Sixty-eighth Congress will be drawing its last short breath. If it emerges with any concrete results from its present legislative jam, it will surprise every observer. It is, of course, possible that in the last few days the wheels may revolve at top speed and some of the measures, now most completely blocked, shot through—but it is not likely. More interesting than any pending bill, is the pending confirmation of Charles B. Warren for Attorney-General, and the changes through which the fight against him has gone. Last week, Republican administration leaders as well as Democrats were convinced he could not go through at this session, and Mr. Coolidge was told exactly that by Senator Cummins. Within the last few days, however, the situation changed and the Warren prospects considerably brightened. If his appointment has not been confirmed by the time these lines are printed, it is likely to be when the new Senate meets on March 5.

There is no doubt at all that, at one time, the votes to reject Mr. Warren were in hand. The argument that has done most to crumble Democratic opposition is that, while it is true that having Warren as Attorney-General is equivalent to the repeal of the Sherman law, yet from the Democratic standpoint it will pay better political dividends to permit the President to burden his administration with him than to take on themselves the onus of having broken precedent by refusing Mr. Coolidge the right to pick his own official family. No one who knows Senators Caraway and Robinson thinks their invitation to breakfast at the White House had any softening effect on their attitude, but it is true the Democratic lineup against him has weakened.

I hear rumors that the new Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Jardine, does not by any means propose to place himself completely under the thumb of Mr. Hoover in the conduct of his department, and that he rather resents the notion that he will be moulded, guided and controlled by him. In other words, he proposes, his friends say, to be his "own man."

That is probably true, but it does not alter the fact that he owes his appointment largely to the endorsement of Mr. Hoover, that he could not have been named had Mr. Hoover objected, that the reasons Mr. Hoover was for him were because of his knowledge that Mr. Jardine's views and his own on the subject of agricultural development and agrarian policy were practically the same, that Mr. Jardine was strongly against such price fixing legislation as the McNary-Haugen bill, and that, generally speaking, they looked at things from the same angle. As a matter of fact, I do not believe Mr. Jardine resents the idea of Hoover's endorsement or help, and I do not believe Hoover wants Mr. Jardine to be his or anyone else's man, save his own. What Hoover was concerned about was in getting a Secretary of Agriculture whose ideas would not be in direct conflict with his own, with whom he could work in harmony, and who would put an end to the offensive activities of the little group of anti-Hoover officials left over in the Department by the late Secretary Wallace. Had he not been able to bring these things about, Mr. Hoover would not have stayed in the Cabinet, and those close to him know this, even while they protest he had never a thought of leaving.

The "taking hold" by Mr. Kellogg is waited with interest at the State Department. He will, naturally, not attract much public attention until after the inauguration. The stepping out of Mr. Hughes and the stepping in of General Dawes will be the two colorful and interesting features of the day, overshadowing the presidential inauguration itself. They mark the real changes in the administration. Mr. Coolidge merely goes through a necessary formal ceremony, but he has been President for nearly two years now, and there is no reason for excitement when he rides down Pennsylvania Avenue this time—provided of course he does not ride his electric horse. But the changes from Hughes to Kellogg and from Cummins to Dawes are striking and important. For some time to come, Kellogg and Dawes will be the two most interesting figures in Washington. The disclosure that Mr. Hughes, before leaving, had already laid the ground work for another naval disarmament conference, means that Mr. Kellogg will at least have the opportunity to do something to distinguish himself, if he cares to try. Perhaps he will disappoint those who have regarded his selection as a compliment the President desired to pay a friend, and have felt that it was intended his stay in the office would be brief.

I never have thought the financial forces who so unitedly backed Mr. Coolidge wanted to wait until the middle of 1926 for the cut in the surtax upon which they have set their hearts. Hence, it is no surprise to read the White House inspired stories to the effect that, under direction of the President, a new Mellon bill is being prepared and an extra session of Congress will be called about the last of September, so as to get, if possible, this question of tax reduction out of the way before the regular session begins in December. The idea, too, is somewhat brazenly thrown out that the "little fellow" having had his tax cut last year, this time the "big income boy" is to get his. What could be fairer than that? No one has, as yet, seen the details of the new bill, but the best information is that it will be drawn largely along the lines of the original Mellon bill.

It is not apt to go through without some fight, but the conviction is firm it will go through. Certainly the votes in the next Congress are there to put it—or anything else—through.

T. R. B.

Washington.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Protocol and the Status Quo

SIR: Professor Felix Frankfurter explains that the Geneva Protocol, in its arrangements for the judicial and arbitral settlement of disputes, makes no provision for the revision of treaties. The objection springs from a confusion of thought, surprising in so acute a mind! Between the making of law and the determination of law the Protocol systematizes and carries further the principles of the Covenant by improving the arrangements for the determination of law. It extends the sphere of that determination into regions which have hitherto escaped it. But it does not touch international legislation. Existing treaties, like the existing laws of property, are a part of the material upon which judicial decisions are based. It would therefore be idle, as M. Politis well observes, to insert in the Protocol provisions for considering them, because the Court could do no more than restate the letter of the Treaty, just as in disputes arising out of what the Court holds to be a matter of domestic jurisdiction it can do no more than to certify that fact.

The Protocol does however explicitly draw attention to Article XI of the Covenant, under which "any circumstances whatever affecting international relations which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends" can be brought before the Assembly or the Council. Both treaties and matters of domestic jurisdiction can be brought forward under this head for international *discussion;* but not for international *determination.*

So much for the letter of the Protocol. Now for its spirit, which Professor Frankfurter would not misconceive, as he evidently does, had he sat through the Geneva debates last September and learned the minds of those who planned it. So far from "stereotyping the post-war European settlements," the Protocol, and the policy of European coöperation of which it is the embodiment, are evidence, and very striking evidence, of the growth of a state of mind which alone will permit of their useful discussion. The defects in the existing treaties will never be removed (as Professor Frankfurter with his experience in the related field of industry ought to appreciate) by keeping Europe in a state of insecurity and lawlessness and entitling every grievance arising out of the existing order a "dispute." The way to revision lies through consent and the way to consent lies through understanding. *There is no other way.*

As for the London Nation, which Professor Frankfurter regards as opposed to the Protocol, I read in its latest issue to hand (January 24) an article in favor of its ratification (with slight reservations) in which the argument is thus summarized: "For the years that lie immediately ahead stability is the main *desideratum.* Europe needs above all to settle down to try to work existing treaties in a reasonable spirit rather than to think of changing them." This was true in 1920 and it has taken some English liberals five years to discover it. If they had discovered it sooner, we should be further along the road by today. Some American liberals have not discovered it even yet. But I cannot believe that Professor Frankfurter will continue to be of those who look for sound judgment to mischief makers, like Nitti and Ludendorff rather than to the wise, patient and farsighted statesmanship of Masaryk, Branting and MacDonald.

ALFRED ZIMMERN.

New York, N. Y.

A British Colony?

SIR: I recently returned from Italy on the Conte Verdi. My baggage was being examined at the dock by my gilt-buttoned, escutcheoned and ubiquitous government. It stood with my declaration sheet in its august hand, peering into the depths of books and underwear. Suddenly the eagle's eye caught sight of a paper-covered Tauchnitz Edition of Told by an Idiot. This book was not on the declaration sheet. In a flash, I heard the swish of the eagle's wings, and the government was upon me. "Don't you know that it is against the law to bring that book into the United States?" I, the culprit, confessed ignorance of the law which excuses no man. "Haven't you read this?" the government said, pointing to a notice in fine print at the bottom of the front cover. I had not. A friend on the boat had handed the book to my wife as we were coming into port, my wife had dropped the book into my bag after the declaration sheet had been made out, and I really had not known it was there. After escaping with my life and my baggage, in the joy of freedom, in the quiet of my home, one day I saw this book and read, for the first time, the fatal warning notice on the cover which I had disobeyed. This is it:

> The copyright of this collection is purchased for continental circulation only, and the volumes may therefore not be introduced into Great Britain or her colonies.

The truth revealed! Then passed before my mind the mood of my ancestors, who had, barefooted, looted the English Tories of their silver spoons and won our independence. Was it possible that the government with its brass buttons and escutcheon had not heard of this? Or was it so long ago that it was forgotten? Or had it all been wiped out by that more magnificent and recent event of which it was said in Parliament, "We spent fifty million pounds on propaganda in the United States to get them to come into the War; and it was worth it"? If government does make idiots of its citizens, then this is, indeed, told by an idiot.

J. P. WARBASSE.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

France and Nationalism

SIR: Your recent editorial on French Nationalism being thought-provoking, allow me to express my opinion on the subject through the courtesy of your paper. The racial elements of France and Germany came mainly from the same source—the Franks—who had spread themselves upon areas now called France and Germany. It was only in 840 that, unfortunately for our civilization, the Franks were split into two wings. Western Franks giving way to Latin influence and language formed the French nation, while the Eastern Franks retaining their low German language formed the German nation. Mr. H. G. Wells, in his Outline of History states that "It was not a difference of race or temperament, it was a difference of language and tradition that split these Frankish peoples asunder."

To these factors I would add another—destructive nationalism which is fed on ego-maximation, greed and groundless fear of an enemy. In order that there may open a way to lasting peace in Europe, the dominant fact of the racial origin of these two peoples should be taught in the schools of France and Germany. This may decrease hatred. Such an attempt can be fruitful and possible only when German and French teachers free themselves from the cruel hold of the would-be patriots and professional nationalists. Teachers with few exceptions seem to be acting like tools all the world over.

The French debt to America effected for war purposes should be paid in order that under its weight, at last, the countrymen of the immortal Victor Hugo, Rousseau, Pasteur and Anatole France may awaken to free themselves from the curse of destructive nationalism and seek other means for settling differences with Germany. This is not expecting too much from France.

A. H. A.

Athens, Ohio.

World Federation of Teachers

SIR: Your readers may care to know that a meeting of the Committee on coöperation with the World Federation of National Teachers' Organizations is being held in connection with the Cincinnati meeting of the National Education Association on Feb. 24.

The coming convention at Edinburgh promises to be an event of International importance. George C. Pringle, secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland, head of convention affairs in Scotland, states the delegates are already assured of hearing, among others, the authors, J. M. Barrie and H. G. Wells; the Premier of England, the Honorable Stanley Baldwin, and Lady Astor.

The meeting two years ago in San Francisco was attended by sixteen nations. Since that time a number of National Teachers' Organizations have been formed from what were formerly merely scattered local Teachers' Organizations. The most recent of these are in Norway, Finland and France. It is a wonderful thing for the teachers of the world to join hands across the traditional political borders of nations. Nothing is more prophetic of lasting peace than this World Federation of those in whose hands lies the education of the youth of the world.

KATHERINE D. BLAKE.

New York, N. Y.

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Three Shades of Black

The Triumph of the Egg, by Sherwood Anderson. Diff'rent, by Eugene O'Neill. At the Provincetown Playhouse.

Exiles, by James Joyce. At the Neighborhood Playhouse.

UNLESS perhaps it was I Want to Know Why, Sherwood Anderson never wrote anything better than The Triumph of the Egg. Nor have there been many short stories written by anyone more poignantly alive, less manufactured, more intensely the product of a soil rather than a carpenter-shop. A queer, pathetic little tragedy, grotesque too, and humorous, beating weakly between narrow walls, enclosing within one of the smallest, poorest, oddest lives so much of the greatly tragic in all life. The human dungeon, and its feebly valiant prisoner, forever scenting liberty, forever more than half aware of his defeat.

Very likely the one-act play that has been made from the story would have seemed a good deal better if one had not read the story beforehand. In play form necessarily a good deal of the story's quality is lost, and things half suggested in print are too insistent when translated on the stage. If the brief minutes in the shabby restaurant become more tangible when enacted by flesh and blood, they also become more incidental. The difference between story and play is the difference between a dream's intensity and the less vivid solidity of broad daylight. On the whole, more is lost than gained. But there is one distinct gain. Sherwood Anderson has a habit of walking along beside his stories as interpreter, explaining them as he goes, trying pleadingly to fasten the listener's attention on this point or on that, promising revelations on the next page. He lets The Triumph of the Egg tell itself far more than most of his stories, but there is always a suggestion of the presence of the cicerone. In reducing this story to action and dialogue the cicerone has been entirely eliminated, and we are thankful for no longer hearing Mr. Anderson's eternal "Now what I want to say is this. . . ."

In general the production at the Provincetown did the Egg justice. Mr. Huston's version of the small restaurant keeper was interesting, sincere, convincing within limits, and a little thin. Contrasted with one's memory of the character in the story, almost any simply competent acting of it was bound to seem thin. As one watched his slightly hurried and over-anxious performance one was seized with the obsession that to bring back the play to the intenser mood of the story required subtler, greater acting than we are ever likely to get.

Yet the picture of the disappointed, garrulous old man chattering on and on about chickens, trying tricks with eggs which never succeed, entertaining his customer with winged monstrosities pickled in alcohol, offering propitiatory cups of coffee "on the house," is one we are not likely to forget. He is such an old fool, he is so scrubby and unsuccessful, so full of the tattered remnants of great plans, his hopes are so pathetically grotesque. He is truly a tragic figure, not deeply, bitterly, grandly tragic, but with that admixture of absurdity which can make trivial humar with the idiosyncracies which make characters real and sudden death.

Five minutes later the curtain goes up on another world. Mr. O'Neill's plays seem to have no mingling of tragedy with the idiosyncrasies which make characters real and tragedy human. There is an earth upon which we live, inhabited by people we know, and a little apart from it is an island where dwell the people of Mr. O'Neill's plays. They are human, extremely human, up to a certain point, but they lack certain things, and are thereby marked as a race apart, a race recognizably like our own, and cousin to us, but strangers nevertheless. Diff'rent is a good example. The elements of humanity are all there, but that something which fills in the chinks of character, which supplies the elusive accent of humanity, is lacking.

To read, Diff'rent is almost unbearably heavy and insistent. The acting, particularly in the case of Miss Mary Blair's able performance of a difficult part, brought out its good qualities, its relentless sincerity, its iron-gray simple honesty, its faithfulness to the mainsprings of human action. But there is so much more to the delineation of human characters on the stage than their mainsprings. There are so many lesser things that mark the difference between one human being and another, and these do not seem within Mr. O'Neill's power or desire to discover. The general scheme of his drama is so completely fixed in his mind that he seems to have nothing left when the time comes to make the general scheme a particular one, and to individualize his marionettes. That is a harsh word, but a true one in this case if we mean high visibility of the strings connecting the author and his creatures, and that simplicity in the creatures which answers to those strings and not to something planted in themselves and trustingly left there. To say that Mr. O'Neill's strings are good strings and true strings and sometimes profound strings does not make them any the less strings; to say that his old maid is true to certain broad things in human nature does not conceal the fact that she is not one unique, individual person.

So Mr. O'Neill's characters strike one not so much as characters as efforts of his single-minded, honest, courageous will. In this same direction we must seek the reason why his tragedy so often degenerates into mere gloom. This will to achieve tragedy is too insistent, just as his will to achieve human situations pushes human characters aside. As tragedy, Diff'rent is engrossing, appalling, fascinating, but not really moving. Sherwood Anderson's old restaurant proprietor, whose tragedy weighs so much less than O'Neill's in the harsh scale of blood and tears, is much more moving, and his tragedy, mingled as it is with all sorts of trivial endearing absurdities, very much more sad.

Of an entirely different sort is the tragedy in James Joyce's Exiles, to the brain spun heaviness of which the acting, in contrast to what acting does for O'Neill at the Provincetown, only added an, at times, ludicrous sagginess of its own. A tragedy of introspection, with all hands successively or in chorus turning out their spiritual, carnal, mental, moral insides, with flashes of terrifying profundity lost in a kind of psychological chess game, all intricate moves and counter-moves, never twice repeated, yet somehow always the same. If only those blinding flashes, those hidden apparitions of souls naked and in pain, could have been merely flashes, apparitions, brief partings of the curtain against a background of more humdrum humanity, of more casual superficial life. But the naked and always more and more naked souls writhed and suffered ceaselessly, in increasingly complex patterns of self-vivisection.

This tragedy also suffered from lack of common clay.

ROBERT LITTELL.

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The Compleat Conservative

The New Barbarians, by Wilbur C. Abbott. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

THE first impression of the reader who dips into The New Barbarians is that its author is deeply prejudiced. That is very bad, if true, for the author is an eminent historian, professor at Harvard University, widely known for his large and careful study, The Expansion of Europe. But further reading will dispel this fear. The historian has not been faithless to his trust. Here is advocated no special dogma. No church nor creed nor race nor party has here warped the facts of history by the heat of partisanship. The author's bias is not specific but general. He suffers here from a limitation of perspective to which all men are subject and to which all his other works, the cautious generalizations of the professional historian, are no less subject. In fine, he is not a special pleader, he is simply and inevitably class-conscious.

For an understanding of the present book this distinction is of paramount importance. Lacking it, the very structure of the work must be unintelligible. We are accustomed to find in books dealing with social problems some sort of articulated argument. Whether a writer is proposing the reform of money by the abolition of specie standards or the reform of agriculture by a tariff wall against cereal imports or the reform of the population by the elimination of the poor he has a thesis of some kind about which his facts are massed. That thesis is what he wishes to convey so that the reader shall at least understand it as a tentative proposal. It is very baffling, therefore, to go through a book dealing with all the most serious problems of society and find no thesis, no argument, no program and no syllogism. The author is alarmed. He views with grave concern. Turning about, he speaks with just pride. Yet he speaks to no end and to no purpose. The reason is that his interest is not a social program but a point of view. Class-consciousness, when it becomes articulate, reveals simply a state of mind.

One instance will suffice to adorn the tale. The new barbarians of Professor Abbott's title are, of course, the hunkies and the dagoes, the later immigrants of the less desirable stocks, as the Nordics say. It would be a gross injustice to his character as a historian to couple him with the Nordic propagandists. No coherent argument is discernible in this book of which the immigrant-racial problem could be said to be the key or climax. Nevertheless, the title does lay a certain emphasis upon the author's aversion to the less Anglo-Saxon strains, and when he speaks of the matter he inclines to take immigrant exclusion for granted as an obvious expression of his feelings. Now if this were an argument it could not avoid the all-important corollary to exclusion, the reproduction of the better stocks. All who have brandished the scarecrow of race suicide, from the great Colonel downward, have attacked the family limitation of the better classes by inescapable inference from their essential argument. If Professor Abbott were in the lists for the Anglo-Saxon stock he must level a lance at birth control. But he does not. On the contrary he mentions this delicate matter only to say, with the slightly embarrassed cough of one to whom good breeding is more important than consistency, that it holds a promise of the stabilization of society. "Whatever one may think of the movements which go under the name of eugenics and birth control . . ." they tend in this direction. "Birth control may be regarded as a natural and instinctive process in the higher ranks of society." Argument or no argument, the higher ranks practice birth control.

A book of this character offers the most tantalizing temptation to the reader to gather an anthology of inconsistencies. Thus the following two-part canon in inverted counterpoint on the theme of inheritance. The author is speaking in great heat of the discrepancy between what the new barbarians find and what they have left behind. Many of them jump a thousand years of progress in crossing the Atlantic, and so on. "These newer additions to our numbers are inheritors, not founders." Then six pages further on, in a major key, andante cantabile, the wisdom of our fathers and the advantages of their children. "If we inherit the mistakes and abuses of those who went before, we inherit, no less, their virtues and achievements." But such an anthology would be an attack on an argument which does not exist. This is not an analysis of the immigration problem. It is simply a picture of the present confusion, as it appears to the middle-class intelligence, pointed up with special reference to the features which the author doesn't like. The color of these features is uniformly red.

> It cannot be denied [thinks Professor Abbott] that Bolshevism represents, in whatever distorted fashion, a widespread sentiment in modern life . . . radical agitators . . . boring in . . . Communist International . . . Spanish and Italian syndicalists . . . British Labor party . . .
>
> In the United States has appeared the "Plumb plan" for railway ownership and management—like the English "Mines Nationalization scheme," with joint control by employes, public and capital, the profits accruing to the employes, the financing to the government. There is the "North Dakota experiment"—state banking, warehousing, financing, marketing and insurance. There have been demands from high places for "direct action," pleas for referendum and recall. There is the program of the "Third Party"—government ownership of railways and national resources, control of money and credits by the "people" through government coöperative banks, restoration of civil rights, abolition of injunction in labor disputes and other "judicial abuses." There is the proposed legislative program of the League of Women Voters—government supervision of maternity and infancy care, a national department for supervising education, education in home economics, a women's bureau, a children's bureau, an interdepartmental hygiene board, independent citizenship for married women, a model child-labor law, and a series of "social legislation" measures.

Behind all these works of the stinking Bolshevik there stands the colossal figure of the noble business man. "It is this class which has, in large measure, made us what we are." But Jehovah is not responsible for Satan.

These, observe, are not the idle words of spellbinding Rotarians. Those words can be quoted by the devil for his purpose. Americanism has been prostituted to base uses. It has been invoked in bad and selfish causes "especially by those who desire to escape assimilation"; Professor Abbott means by radicals in the cause of free speech and assembly. Toleration, "admirable in theory, perhaps less admirable in practice," has degenerated into a "carelessness and indifference to abuses," even to "the appeal to

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endure attacks upon the fundamental principles of American life and institutions under the guise of 'liberal' and 'broad-minded' sentiments." Therefore he introduces a chapter on radicalism and phraseocracy in which he shows that Mr. Tawney has befouled our civilization with a phrase: acquisitive society.

The first criterion of true class-consciousness is an unclouded belief that civilization is identical with that class. There are classes: witness the pretensions of the proletariat. But the bourgeoisie (Professor Abbott assumes the Marxian word with pride) is not a class. It is Society. "These pages," the author announces in his preface, "were written before the recent elections in Great Britain and the United States . . . The results of those elections have been a blow to the subversive elements." In the name of Baldwin and Coolidge and the Tory Spirit, Amen.

C. E. Ayres.

Mr. Firkins on Howells

William Dean Howells: A Study by Oscar W. Firkins. Cambridge: The Harvard University Press. $4.

"ON the question of Mr. Howells's future status in the court of letters, I am adverse to dogmatism," Mr. Firkins decides at the conclusion of his exhaustive and laborious examination of the voluminous Howells record. "In my view, justice has not yet been done to his power and service as a critic. No approach to justice has been done to the singular merit of his later poems. I doubt, moreover, if due recognition has been accorded to three great elements in his fiction—its vitality, which seems to be inadequately felt, the surpassing distinctness and variety of its characterization, and its firm grasp of some of the rarer and more elusive aspects of everyday reality. His fortunes in his own day have by no means equalled his deserts; but to feel this strongly is not to be overconfident that the future will side with the deserts against the fortunes . . . About the novels two things may be confidently averred: they will be perennially valuable to scholarship, and they will never be valuable to Philistine middle-class humanity." But, "The profundity of these fictions in dealing with some of the most signal interests and aspects of life should plead for the continuance of their hold on the doubtful loyalty of a forgetful race."

Mr. Firkins would hesitate to recommend Howells to a cultivated Japanese who knew nothing of America by travel or reading,—"I can imagine myself ending with the recommendation that he get his *elementary* schooling in American life from the works of some inferior writer." For "a very considerable part of Mr. Howells's fiction deals with a highly specialized variety of American." . . . "He is simple: simple in his criticism, simple in his religion, simple in his economic theory. But his simplicity is ultimate, not obvious; and it requires a dash of subtlety in the reader to grasp the fact of his normality." And "Amid these inauspicious signs, there is one proffer of encouragement. Mr. Howells holds a position among his contemporaries which is far superior to his vogue . . . It is always possible that the future may be wiser than its sonship to the purblind present would lead us to assume."

Maybe Howells's fate in that future will owe little or nothing to Mr. Firkins's treatment of his work, exhaustive, laborious, and zealous as it obviously is. Mr. Firkins has probably read more of Howells and read him more painstakingly than any living person, if his summaries, analyses, and bibliographies of periodical articles as well as published volumes are proof, and yet for all this industry and enthusiasm—and the perpetual flow of dogmatic opinion—he fails signally to evoke any picture of the man or establish any idea of his position in American letters. He writes of Mr. Howells as if he were a contemporary and of the Howells America as if it were the America of today! And what is more inexplicable he considers him almost in vacuo, as a solitary specimen of the novelist, the critic, the journalist, not as one figure in the historical stream, significant more from its relations than from its intrinsic importance. It is as if Mr. Firkins had excavated Howells from the sands of time. Entranced by his discovery, he discoursed upon his works in tones of judicious rhapsody as the only extant examples of their kind.

Dogmatic criticism of this sort (which one had supposed no longer practiced to such naïve lengths) becomes merely tiresome. Mr. Firkins writes of his subject, as critic: "The supremacy of simple truth in fiction had been avouched by other men; it was *implanted* by Mr. Howells. The distinction between his predecessors and himself is the distinction between explorer and settler. The speculative idea and the illustrative practice, hitherto largely divided, were to effect their convergence in a mind which should invest the cult of realism with the double dignity of a business and a gospel. Mr. Howells massed and squared the idea, brought to its defence perfect clearness of head, perfect sureness of conviction, absolute unity of purpose; the election was final; the self-committal unreserved; the will added its stay, the conscience its mandate; a life, in a sense, flowered in an undertaking in which intelligence at its crest became the voice of manhood at its acme, and the culminant phase of an incomparable style supplied the apt and peerless instrument for both." After this what more can be said of anyone? Incidentally, "intelligence at its crest became the voice of manhood at its acme," is a good illustration of Mr. Firkins's effort in style, an odd grafting of eighteenth century aphorism on Victorian smugness.

To give further example of Mr. Firkins's critical method, in dealing with the novels of the master—The World of Chance, he holds "is a book of dots and particles; it crumbs experience . . . In this household four deaths occur in rapid succession. The young husband, a religious hypochondriac, exposes his two children to scarlet fever; his suicide expiates their death, and the head of the house dies of trouble and old age. How has Mr. Howells reconciled this debonair and tripping narrative of literary trial and triumph with the inclusion of horrors from which Emily Brontë or Thomas Hardy might have shrunk? The inadequacy of this reconciliation is the fault of the work. He has approached these solemnities, not lightly indeed, but with a desultory and abstemious hand. His sparing and cursory touch seems to claim, and to concede, a dispensation from emotional responsibility . . . I doubt if it be quite fitting to emphasize light issues in the presence of the imminence of great ones, however decent and reverent be one's bearing toward the solemnities and austerities themselves . . . When Thalia gives a feast, she should hardly invite Melpomene; to slight or to court her guest in such an assemblage seems equally a breach of taste."

Mr. Firkins quaintly summarizes "the field" of the Howells novel thus: "Mr. Howells restricts himself to an experience on which fortune and nature have laid their own restrictions. A prosperous and virtuous man of letters, living in good society, is shut out from many of those fluctuations which diversify the experience of less fortunate and

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less exemplary men . . . In these forty volumes, adultery is never pictured; seduction never; divorce once and sparingly (A Modern Instance); marriage discordant to the point of cleavage, only once and in the same novel with the divorce; crime only once with any fullness (The Quality of Mercy); politics never; religion passingly and superficially; science only in crepuscular psychology; mechanics, athletics, bodily exploits or collisions, very rarely." . . . Howells would have enjoyed the encomium—"A prosperous and virtuous man of letters, living in good society, is shut out from many of those fluctuations which diversify the experience of less fortunate and less exemplary men"!

If it is difficult to understand how such a book as Mr. Firkins's can be written in this day and generation, it is equally surprising to have it sponsored by the press of our greatest university, except for the fact that Mr. Firkins on Howells has something of the aimless and arid quality of the doctor's thesis in literature.

ROBERT HERRICK.

Journalism in Excelsis

Leviathan, by William Bolitho. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.

EACH June a fresh squadron of them turns up in New York: earnest, excited young men and women just from college, wanting to know whether newspaper reporting is a desirable preliminary to doing Big Work as a writer; and if so, or in fact if not, How Do You Get a Job? One labors with these children, puffing with anxiety to make it clear that journalism may do a little good or harm, but that nothing really matters except the will to write. In the future one may save at least part of one's breath; when they ask just what it is possible for the journalist to do, one may tell them to go and read Bolitho.

For Bolitho is additional proof of the fact that you may tear up all the rules and make new ones as you go along—if you are strong enough. Bolitho is a journalist. He does a weekly journalistic article, which appears in The Observer (London) and in the New York World. These articles are written hurriedly, under compulsion of the event: it is Bolitho's job to be at the most interesting spot in any of three countries, at a climactic moment and produce a thousand words, profound and lively, in time for the next deadline. And he does it, turning out not only journalism of the required competence but, as everyone who has seen one of his articles knows, something at least next door but one to literature. Sometimes closer; and always, something stamped with the impress of his private mint. He gets his vividness by writing in the present tense—a trick which makes inevitable the mention of Carlyle. He gets his air of profundity, perhaps unfairly, by writing usually of politicians, so that it is not hard for him to know twice as much as those he celebrates. And he has a gift for the one right word, which goes as directly to the heart of things as did, in the eighties of the last century, the writing of a young Anglo-Indian who was another good journalist.

Bolitho, I hear, is a South African who has lived in London and Paris only since he has been of age. In his work is the aloof, sharp eye for odd detail which ought to mark the alien—and how often doesn't! He is also the zestful cosmopolite whose very avidness betrays the provinces from which he has come; no one wears his opera hat with such a swagger as the man who bedded with the kine not long ago. Finally, he is a fair example of the post-war mind, with his cynicism, his scorn of "statesmen," his dark perturbation over the huge, intricate machinery of life, which seems to move faster and ever faster—a perturbation which he tries to turn into casual cynicism, like a man walking past a graveyard at night and mentioning with a laugh the fear he has of ghosts. Moreover, the suggestion of Carlyle should lead no one astray as to his philosophy; Bolitho's heart aches for the miseries of the plain people, however much he is amused at the perplexities of those great ones through whose pretences he so readily sees.

These sketches, as I have been trying to suggest, are about as good as journalistic writing can be: and the limits of the newspaper are indicated with some exactitude when I say that they are less than they ought to be. By which I mean that we have a right to expect something much better from a man of Bolitho's talent. As "early work" they are quite acceptable; but when one sees how much better are the things done by lesser men working in such media as the novel, biography, history, one is inclined to say that fairly soon now Bolitho will have been a journalist quite long enough.

B. B.

A Negro Novel

The Fire in the Flint, by Walter F. White. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

EXCEPT in the case of Jean Toomer, a reluctance to tackle Negro fiction may well be justifiable, for when a Negro writes fiction he usually steers clear of the fundamental aspects of Negro life and vengefully goes in for polemics. The Fire in the Flint is not free from such a taint, yet one can not, in spite of oneself, help being moved—and moved deeply—by this epic tale of the South. Of swift, resistless action, of invincible power, told in a direct, straightforward fashion, Walter White's first novel just misses being great. Had it fewer verbal superfluities, a closer eye to dramatization, and a more tenacious attention to style, there is scarcely a doubt that it would be one of the most compelling novels of the American period. As a picture of the inquisition that inevitably confronts every educated, upstanding negro who returns to the South—"to fight it out there"—it is pregnant with fire, power, emotion. Mr. White's tragic hero is moulded in the style of protagonist in modern Negro fiction set two years ago by T. S. Stribling in Birthright. Kenneth Harper, like Peter Siner, is educated up North; then Harvard Medical School, the Sorbonne, the War. From his service and his ideals he turns home.

To Central City, a Georgia hamlet, he returns desperately anxious not to be swept into the mad whirlpool of racial strife. For a time he succeeds in preserving an untarnished spirit, but gradually—through the snorting contempt of the neurotically enflamed Bob, through the slow, even beat of the white pulse, through the exposures of peonage and share-cropping, through the unseemly attitude of the whites towards the blacks—he becomes mistily conscious of the precariousness of life for the negro in this tortured milieu. The blow that shattered his last illusion was the rape of his sister Mamie, Bob's epic flight after murdering the girl's defilers—by far the most moving

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passage in the book—the chase with bloodhounds, and Bob's burning by the bacchanalian mob.

From this point on one is quietly aware of the utter futility of struggle—of everything. You pray and hope for a way out—a solution—but beyond reason there is something that unerringly brings it home to you that there is no way out. Slowly the pendulum swings; it is a mere matter of minutes before everything is nakedly still.

Kenneth is returning home after a visit to the house of Roy Ewing, whose daughter he has saved in an appendicitis operation a few days before. Roy Ewing is white and it happens that he is out of town. It is midnight. And in Central City it is not the thing for "niggers," doctors or anything else, to be calling on white folks at that hour of the night, especially when the head of the household is out of the city. Down that way it means but one thing: sexual adventure, and the whites lurking in the adjacent shadows do their duty as they conceive it. They take Harper out on a country road and lynch him. . . .

That is all. ERIC WALROND.

Imaginary Lives, by Marcel Schwob. Translated by Lorimer Hammond. New York: Boni and Liveright.$2.50.

MARCEL SCHWOB spent his rather short life in picking up curios along the byways of history. He could add the exercise of a fantastic imagination, where required; and he could set down all his oddities and horrors with a clear-cut and chastened brevity. Among his "curieux ouvrages d'érudition" his Children's Crusade is best known in this part of the world. In his Vies Imaginaires we have the immediate successor of that work; but here an eclectic talent ranges at will over all history, ancient, mediaeval and modern. His "lives" are treated with some degree of freedom, being rather fantasies than transcription. He is no more occupied with his individuals than with their environments. These brief pieces resemble indeed those pictorial compositions in which, after you have studied the head that fills the major part of the space, you find equal opportunities for study in the details with which the small margin roundabout is packed. Thus his sketch of Clodia is essentially a cursory yet pungent account of the corruption of society in the later days of the Roman Republic. His paper on Fra Dolcino depicts poignantly the zigzag course of a mediævel heresy—an episode touched on (but without anachronism!) by Dante. Later pieces deal, curiously enough, with British highwaymen and pirates: Schwob, Frenchman though he was, had a strong slant toward English life—he even collaborated in an adaption of Hamlet for the French stage.

Mr. Hammond's translation reproduces well the chiseled brevity of the original, and is on the whole good enough to justify its appearance so long after the fact. But he is sometimes careless in his rendering of proper nouns. Surely, for example, "Diogenes Lærce" should not have continued to stand for Diogenes Laertius, nor "Lucques" for Lucca.

H. B. F.

The New Candide, by John Cournos. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.50.

THERE are, perhaps, two classes of people who will be disappointed in The New Candide: those who like Voltaire and those who like Mr. Cournos. The rest of the world is free to enjoy to their several limits this picaresque account of the life and adventures of Peter Pock, Junior, the son of a Chicago pork-packer, the graduate of Bah-Bah University, the protegé of Dr. Gabbe, and the ever-so-gullible pursuer of Cunegonde, alias Georgina. The materials for a ferocious satire are here, and pork-packers and pragmatists might well shudder in anticipation of Mr. Cournos's drubbing; but Mr. Cournos is conscientiously gay, and the satire scarcely ever roughens the skin. In short, the New Candide is excellent light reading, and when a few words are past will probably eke out a surreptitious existence in our mid-western colleges, where an appreciation of its occasional bawdy touches will pass as a high and recondite form of sophistication. Taine said that French manners do not suit men beyond the channel; and on the strength of the New Candide, one is tempted to agree with him. In using Voltaire's theme on our own time and in the English language, the humor must be coarsened, the obscenity should be made more downright and plain: otherwise the story is as likely to lack a genuine flavor as a French bedroom farce drafted into the service of Broadway. We have a right to expect a full-fleshed work from Mr. Cournos, even when he wanders outside the province he has made his own. The New Candide alas! lacks the robust touch that would make it live, and lacking this, all its double-meanings and salacious sallies have the air of being the end, rather than the incidental entertainment, of the satire itself.

L. M.

Old Masters and Modern Art, by Sir Charles Holmes. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. $7.

THIS is an interesting and vigorous guide to the Italian art of the Renaissance, with particular reference to that possessed by the British National Gallery. Sir Charles Holmes is the liberal type of academician: he is interested in the art of the past; but his interests are touched by the problems and dilemmas of the modern painter. Belonging to the older group of critics in that he often pays as much attention to the symbolism and mental background of the picture as to its technical detail, he nevertheless brings to this all-around interpretation an alert mind—as in the hint that the mysterious rocks in Leonardo's Virgin of the Rocks are an attempt to publish his heretic notions of geology. The typography and the reproductions are excellent.

L. M.

Contributors

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